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THE
BEGGAR'S DAUGHTER

OF

BETHNAL GREEN.

Romantic
A COMEDY.

BY

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES,

AUTHOR OF VIRGINIUS, CAIUS GRACCHUS, AND WILLIAM TELL.

[First edition]

One dream of passion and of beauty more,
And in its bright fulfilment let me pour
My soul away.

FELICIA HEMANS.

LONDON:

BASIL STEWART, AND J. RIDGWAY; CONSTABLE AND CO.
EDINBURGH; R. GRIFFIN AND CO. GLASGOW;
AND W. F. WAKEMAN, DUBLIN.

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J. STARKE, PRINTER, GLASGOW.

TO

KIRKMAN FINLAY, ESQ.

*President of the Roman Catholic Schools' Association,
&c. &c. &c.*

MY DEAR SIR,

In the name of my little countrymen and countrywomen, the children of Irish Roman Catholics, resident in Glasgow, I dedicate this Play to you. Your steady countenance and zealous advocacy of the Schools which have been established for their benefit, and from which incalculable advantages have been already derived; entitle you to their gratitude.—Their country is your debtor.

On my own account, Sir, I have to thank you for attention and kindness, such as I shall not very readily forget; and to assure you that I am with sincerity,

Your attached Servant,

J. S. KNOWLES.

THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF THE GREAT KING

OF GREAT BRITAIN

AND OF THE

REIGN OF THE GREAT KING
OF GREAT BRITAIN
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AND OF THE
REIGN OF THE GREAT KING
OF GREAT BRITAIN

AND OF THE

REIGN OF THE

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Men.

LORD WILLOUGHBY,	.....	Mr. Vining.
LORD WOODVILLE,	.....	Mr. Thompson.
LORD WILFORD,	 <i>Son to Lord Woodville</i>	Mr. Cooper.
LORD THOMAS,	 <i>Son to Lord Willoughby</i>	Mr. Younge.
BELMONT,	 <i>Friend to Wilford</i>	Mr. Mude.
STAFFORD,	 <i>Friend to Lord Thomas</i>	Mr. Lee.
LORD MAYOR,	.....	Mr. Cathie.
ALBERT,	 <i>The blind Beggar</i>	Mr. Aitken.
OLD SMALL,	.....	Mr. W. Farren.
YOUNG SMALL,	 <i>His Son</i>	Mr. Harley.
PETER,	 <i>Servant to Old Small</i>	Mr. Liston.
RALPH,	 <i>Son to the Hostess</i>	Mr. Browne.
STRAP,.....	} <i>Suitors to the Beggar's Daughter</i> {	Mr. Webster.
MALLET,		Mr. Salter.
MORTICE,		Mr. Gattie.
STITCH,	.....	Mr. Hughes.
Chaplain,	.....	Mr. Fenton.
1st Lord,	.....	Mr. East.
2d Lord,	.....	Mr. O. Jones.
1st Citizen,	.....	Mr. Fenton.
2d Citizen,	.....	Mr. C. Jones.
3d Citizen,	.....	Mr. Barnes.
1st Apprentice,	.....	Mr. Howell.
2d Apprentice,	.....	Mr. Yarnold.
3d Apprentice,	.....	Mr. Bland.
Herald,	.....	Mr. Bedford.
Beadle,	.....	Mr. Sheriff.
Officer,	.....	Mr. Honnor.
Barons, Knights, Gentlemen, Gentlemen-Pen sioners, Trumpeters, Herald, Citizens.....		

Women.

QUEEN ELISABETH,	Mrs. Faucit.
EMMA,	<i>The Beggar's Wife</i>.....Mrs. Knight.
BESS,	<i>The Beggar's Daughter</i> ,...Miss E. Tree.
MRS. THRIFTY,	<i>The Hostess of the Queen's Arms</i> , Mrs. C. Jones.
KATE,	<i>Chambermaid of ditto</i> ,...Mrs. Orger.
Wife of 1st Citizen,	Mrs. Weston.
Wife of 2d Citizen,	Mrs. Kendall.
Wife of 3d Citizen,	Mrs. Webster.
Ladies of the Court—Bridemaids, Women, &c.....	

DEBORAH STAFFORD

◆ 49 頁 ◆

THE
BEGGAR'S DAUGHTER
OF BETHNAL GREEN.

ACT I.

SCENE FIRST.

A GARDEN NEAR THE THAMES.

Enter LORD WILFORD and BELMONT, the former dressed as a peasant, the latter as a courtier.

Wil. To doubt that woman loves, to question were
If light her dwelling fair hath in the sun.
That passion sweet at home is ne'er so much
As when it doth sojourn in her sweet breast !
But noble house^d may noble tenant lack
And roof a sordid one; so woman's heart
May lodge ignoble passion—vanity,
The lust of pleasure, pride of rank, or wealth;
Guests uncongenial unto love; with which
It can't consort, nor enters where they are.

Bel. So, of love's gem possession, to ensure
Thou doff'st thy title, and resolv'st to roam
In modest guise of simple yeoman's son.

Wil. E'en so.

Bel. The gem, such labour seeks, is priz'd.
You'll take some pains to pick the casket too.

Wil. I'll pick a casket fit to hold the gem.

Bel. I prithee figure to me such a one.

Wil. To try a metaphor, it shall be rare
As may be; curious in the workmanship;
But, in the use, the primal value still:
Not shining chief where constant falls the eye,
But opening brighter, that, to look within,
The rich without seems poor; and to complete
My casket fair, that shall love's jewel shrine,
As worth's thrice worthy, modestly reveal'd,
Its spring that does its value chief disclose,
Shall coyly answer to the prying touch.

Bel. May she be rich?

Wil. Ay, if she knows it not.

Bel. Titled?

Wil. A princess, so the queen of wives.

Bel. Shall she be brown, or fair?

Wil. Whatever hue,
Fair truth commendeth with ingenuous blush.

Bel. Say she is poor and low—

Wil. So nature proves
At odds with fortune, she will answer me.

Bel. But she must love thee?

Wil. Ay, 'bove earth and sea!
Yea, 'bove herself, of twice their worth the sum!
So that, while others my pretensions scan
To be the master of such bravery,
She shall account my wearing on't its pride,
And the o'er-rich wish richer to deserve me!

Bel. Thou hast a quaint conception of a wife.

Wil. Why, where 'tis granted us but once to pick,
While what we pick we needs must keep for life,
Best take the prime!—The less our risk to find

Possession that's contentless envies want.

Bel. Think'st thou a fever may be ta'en or not
As likes a man?

Wil. Who then were sick of one!

Bel. Thou answer'st well; nor ill do I rejoin,
As well premise, resolve, or calculate,
When thou shalt fall in love. A fever that
Sudden as intermittent or the plague—
To which by them that know it best 'tis liken'd—
That comes upon you. Love by rule forsooth!
Love by philosophy! Thou shalt be smit
I' th' twinkling of an eye—infected by
A touch!—this minute sound as mountain health,
And helpless next as bed-rid tenant of
An hospital!

Wil. Thou know'st me not.

Bel. I do.

And that thou'lt find—I hope to thy content.
Meanwhile, a comrade if thou want'st, take me,
A season'd man, and of adventure fond.

Wil. I do't with thanks.

Bel. I will but doff this suit,
To fit me to thy seeming quality;
And join thee straight. Where shall we meet?

Wil. At Paul's—
An hour from this.

Bel. Be sure thou'lt find me there.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE SECOND.

A CHAMBER IN OLD SMALL'S.

Enter OLD SMALL.

O. Small. Who'd have a son—a plague—to drive him mad?
To hunt for, or to watch from morn till night
To coax, to scold, and with no better thrift
To-day than yesterday! A lack-wit, caught
By this and that, and held by nothing. Now
At bowls; next hour at cocking; presently,
A race, a show, a feast, and after that
Perchance a quarrel. Any thing but work.
What, Peter! Peter!

PETER enters.

Peter. Master, here am I.

O. Small. Well, my son, Peter?

Peter. He's not to be found

In all Whitechapel, seek him where I would.
I call'd in at the Cock, he was not there;
The Fox and Geese, but came no better speed;
The Fountain was burn'd down last Tuesday night;
The Rising sun has stopp'd since Lady-day;
The Crown and Mitre swore at me when last
I sought him there, so thither went I not;
The Duke of Buckingham and he are out
Ere since he broke the drunken tapster's pate;
And never goes he to the Loggerheads,
Except o' Sundays.

O. Small. Peter! Peter!

Peter. Master?

O. Small. I sore mistrust thee, Peter.

Peter. Master! me?

O. Small. Ay, by my troth, I do!—mistrust thee sore!
Thou'rt in his secrets. I'll be sworn thou art.
I saw you wink to him on Sunday last,
At dinner time. Last Tuesday night, you said
'Twas only ten when he came in; and not
A minute from the bolting of the door
The clock struck twelve,—I heard it! Wednesday noon
You took a bundle in, and said 'twas from
The laundress: when I open'd it, and found
A spendthrift cloak and jerkin, spick and span
New from the tailor's board: and worse than that,
The whole of Thursday morning wast thou out;
And when I ask'd thee where, thou could'st not tell!
Can'st tell me now?

Peter. I went an errand, Sir,
To Barbican—an errand of mine own.

O. Small. An errand of thine own to Barbican!
How came I then to see thee at Mile-end?

Peter. At Mile-end, Sir?

O. Small. At Mile-end, Sir! Thou runn'st
An errand well!

Peter. You saw me at Mile-end?

O. Small. When thou wast gone to Barbican! Well Sir?

Peter. From Barbican I went Sir, to Mile-end,
Not finding what I sought at Barbican.

O. Small. I have thee now, my piece of innocence!
My spice of honesty! my serving man,
That runs so well on errands! At Mile-end
I saw thee not, but saw thee at the foot
Of London Bridge!

Peter. The foot of London Bridge?

O. Small. Ay Sir !

Peter. And where should you have seen me else?
When what I sought and miss'd at Barbican,
And miss'd again in seeking at Mile-end,
At London Bridge I found !

O. Small. O did'st thou so?

Would thou wast o'er the bridge ! Thou jackanapes !
Wast thou not too at Hackney that same time ;
At Greenwich, down, and Chelsea, up the Thames ?
At Kensington and Islington, besides ?
The tower, St. Paul's, and Westminster, to boot ?
Did'st thou not foot from breakfast time till noon,
Ground it would take a man a week to ride ?
Thou knave of nimble toe, but nimbler tongue !
Varlet ! Thou went'st not to Mile-end, nor yet
To foot of London Bridge, no more than I
That never saw thee there ! I know not where
Thou went'st, but whither thou wilt go I'll tell.
To Tyburn, sirrah ! (*knock.*) Let thy master in ! [*Exit Peter.*]
His kennel never likes your chained dog,
And there are men like dogs, who loathe the thing
Howe'er it profit them, to which you'd tie them :
Who, like your dog, would forfeit house and mess
To break their chain, and forage for a bone.
What if I take the collar from his neck
And leave him like the prodigal of old,
To his own will, till sad experience proves
That freedom's is the bitter'st mastery.
It shall be so. He cannot come to worse,
He may to better. I will do it straight.

Enter YOUNG SMALL and PETER.

Y. Small. Good morning, father.

O. Small. Morning, dog ! 'tis noon.

Y. Small. Well then, good noon.

O. Small. Nor morning, noon, nor night,
Thou bringest good to me, so wish me none.
Where hast thou been?

Y. Small. Hard by, at master All-gain's.

O. Small. And what about?

Y. Small. Playing at loggats, Sir.

O. Small. At loggats?—Spendthrift! Idler!—Play at
Shillings, and pounds! [pence,

Y. Small. I do what's next to that,—
Play for them, Sir.

O. Small. To lose them, cur; to lose them!
Hast thou not lost to-day?

Y. Small. No, by my troth.
I'm winner, save a halfpenny by a groat,
And should have doubled that, but for foul play.
But four we wanted, and the bowl was mine,
There stood the loggats, Sir, a glorious sight;
And only four to get!—and here stood I,—
There's not a lad in all Whitechapel, Sir,
Is such a hand at loggats.—Here stood I
With victory in hand, sure as the bowl
With which I thus took aim.—A steady aim
Is half the game at loggats, Sir.—You'll mind
We wanted only four; the bowl was mine.
There stood the loggats; here stood I,—They say
I have an air at loggats—thus I stand,
My left leg planted like a buttress, so.
My body pois'd upon the right, with knee
Bent neither more nor less.—I'd like you, Sir,
To see me play at loggats.—Look, Sir—

O. Small. Pshaw!
Come, throw the bowl, and make an end.

Y. Small. And end
I should have made on't, had I thrown the bowl.

O. Small. What hinder'd thee?

Y. Small. A needle-full of thread!
 A nail of tape! a button mould! a piece
 Of list! the vapour of a smoothing board!
 Thus, as I said, I held the bowl.—'Twas all
 But thrown. Ne'er out of cannon mouth look'd shot
 More certain of its aim—than from my hand
 The bowl look'd at the loggats. In a twink
 Six of the nine at least were lying low.
 "Stop," cries a sniv'ling tailor, "master Small,
 'Tis not your turn to play."—The pair of shears,
 To clip me so, and thus cut up the game!

O. Small. Now mark me, Thomas Small; thou'rt twenty—
 What art thou master of? [one:

Y. Small. Of quarter-staff,
 Rackets and fives—I'm capital at fives!—
 Hop but the ball, I'm sure to make it fly
 Like bullet from a gun.—I play at bowls
 And quoits,—at quoits I'm famous for a ringer!
 And then I'll put the stone with any one.

O. Small. Master thou art I know of idleness;
 But name to me the craft thou'rt master of.
 Art fit to be a turner?

Y. Small. Burn the lathe!

O. Small. A cooper?

Y. Small. Sooner I'd be stav'd to death!

O. Small. A smith?

Y. Small. As lieve you'd hammer out my brains!

O. Small. A tailor?

Y. Small. Slay me with a needle first!

O. Small. What then art fit to be?

Y. Small. A gentleman.

O. Small. A gentleman!—Thou scarce canst read!

Y. Small. What then?

That's nothing in a gentleman.

O. Small. Thou writ'st;

But such a hand, the clerk's a cunning one
That makes it out.

Y. Small. That's like a gentleman.

O. Small. Thou canst not cypher; hand thee in a bill
Of twenty items, and 'twill puzzle thee
To add it up.

Y. Small. That's quite the gentleman.
Father, thou truly said'st I'm twenty-one,
And he that's twenty-one, by law's a man:
So I'm a man, and as a man am free.
I'm master now of handsome twenty pounds,
Left to me by my godfather; to them
Add thou what grace thy graciousness may please,
And in my own way let me try the world.

O. Small. Thou'rt like a wayward horse that will not
break;
The training thee's all labour, profit none,
And thrift of fruitless toil's to give it up.
Thy will would have thee free before thine age;
Thine age, like false friend, now doth back thy will;
Both are too strong for me, and I must yield.
Wait for me,—I'll be with you presently.

[*Exit Old Small.*]

Y. Small. Does he consent, and am I free indeed!
New bonds I fear'd to curb me in new rights,
And he takes off the old,—I thrive apace.
Most hopeful setting out! So fair begun
Must needs fair ending have.

Peter. You play'd that game
Of loggats passing well.

Y. Small. I play'd a game—
But not at loggats, Peter. Never more
I'll play at loggats! Peter, nought I've done
But walk since morning up and down Cheapside,
Feasting my eyes on ladies of the court

And its precincts, that come to bargain there.
O Peter, homely are the silks they wear,
To their more silken looks! A city coif
Hath twice their pride! No tossing of the head;
No turning of the shoulder in disdain;
But eyes that drop when they your glances catch.
As if to let you gaze! Peter, I'll make
My fortune!

Peter. Prithee, how?

Y. Small. Now try and guess.

Peter. I could not guess, were I to try a week.

Y. Small. Peter, thou canst be shrewd—look at me,
Peter;

Scan me from head to foot. Premising, now,
Thou knew'st me not, would'st take me for the son
Of Gilbert Small, the pin maker?

Peter. More like

I'd take you for the son of Walter Husk
The baker to the east of Aldersgate.

Y. Small. A baker's son! a crust hath pith as much
As thou hast wit. Take me for son of him!

Peter. He's tall, and so art thou.

Y. Small. What's tall? What's tall?

Pronounce me son unto a barber's pole,
For it is tall! To say a man is tall
Is nothing, Peter! Look at me again,
And guess what way I'll make my fortune. There,
I fancy that's a leg.

Peter. It is a leg.

Y. Small. And thereunto's a foot.

Peter. Yea is there, of
A verity.

Y. Small. Go to. You flatter now.
You think me vain, but I'm not vain, altho'

I have a leg and foot—ay, and a face
Moreover.

Peter. Certainly thou hast a face.
He'd have a face who'd say thou had'st not one.

Y. Small. Thou hast a wit, good Peter! Show thee but
A thing, thou seest it.

Enter OLD SMALL, unperceived.

Look at my waist.
Now lift your eye a little farther up,
And ponder how my shoulders spread. Dost see?
Now on the whole—to speak it modestly—
Taking me altogether, am I not
A very personable man? Now, Peter,
How shall I make my fortune?—Why, you fool!
By love!

O. Small. [*coming forward.*] Who marries thee, loves
not herself:

She goes a voyage in a fair-weather bark,
That scuds while wind and wave do favour it,
But in itself hath no sea worthiness
To stand their buffeting! Here—have thy wish;
Thou'lt find no niggard hand has fill'd that purse.
I give it, thee to feed thy wantonness;
But, e'en for that, I'd have thee chary on't.
There's not a piece in it but is made up
Of grains of fractions, every one of which
Was slowly gather'd by thy father's thrift,
And hoarded by his abstinence! It holds
How many minutes ta'en from needful sleep!
How many customary wants denied!
How many throbs of doubting—sighs of care,
Laid out for nothing, in thy waywardness.
But take it with a blessing! Fare-thee-well!
Thou never yet could'st suit thee, Thomas, to

Thy father's house; but should there come the time,
Thou know'st the door, and it will open to thee!

[*Exit Old Small.*]

Y. Small. Peter, I'll stay at home. The good old man!
He loves me, Peter. Take him back the purse,
And say I'll stay at home,

Peter. And keep at home?
Wait, like his leger, on the desk?

Y. Small. I will! —
That is, I would.

Peter. And follows, *if I could*.

Y. Small. I fear it does.

Peter. What's got, restor'd, may not be got again.

Y. Small. Peter, you counsel like an oracle.

Peter. You've rubb'd your eyes till they are red.

Y. Small. Indeed?

Peter. Look in the glass.

Y. Small. A pity not to make
My fortune, Peter!—Give me back the purse.
I'll make my fortune,—Go and get my trunk,
And bring it after me to Cripplegate.
Thou said'st, as I came in, thy place was lost
On my account—I'll find thee in a new one.

[*Exit Peter.*]

There's no controuling fate; and fate, I see,
By love has destin'd me to make my fortune.
So farewell to my father's house! I could
Be sad at bidding it good by—but will not.
I'll think on nought but how we'll meet again,
When love fulfills what fate decrees for me:
Bids Thomas Small a golden wedding hail,
And sends him home a very gentleman!

[*Exit Y. Small.*]

SCENE THIRD.

ST. PAUL'S.

Enter BELMONT, disguised as a yeoman.

Bel. The gnomon says I'm late, but not my friend.
Holds he his purpose still, and keeps he not
His hour? With him is it the season when
We look for changes still; as husbandmen
Reliance little, place upon the mood
Of young and fickle spring. A soul he hath
Ennobled to the height of nobleness,
And solid mind; but then a heart, so fraught
With nature's sweet affections; and, withal,
A fancy of such sun—so warm and bright—
Unschool'd as yet he is by the pedant world,
Men call him wavering,—But, by my troth,
He's constant now!—What discomposes him?

Enter LORD WILFORD.

Wil. I've lost her!

Bel. Whom?

Wil. Whom I did never have,
But seeing once, would have for ever! Such
A wonder of a maid!—Cull all that's rare
In beauty's garden, else you'll never pick
The flower can match her!

Bel. Art thou mad or merry?

Wil. Mad!—Mad!—If either, I am mad! I'll ne'er

Be merry more! I could not go the length
Of Ludgate Hill, but I must horse it thither.
Returning thence, a motley group of men,
Mechanics, servants, masters, old and young,
Collected round some object which they seem'd
To gaze with most admiring wonder on,
Attracted me.—What think you 'twas? A maid—
A maid attir'd in unpretending suit
Of humble russet!—such a distance wide
Remov'd from any child of luxury
Or wealth, not e'en a simple ribbon-knot
To grace her coif and bonnet did expend
It's chary costliness! But O what wealth
Had nature rain'd where fortune seem'd to grudge
The poorest drop of her enriching shower!
Sight could not take it in!—the tongue would stop
E'er it could sum it half—all terms out-run
That rate the value of known loveliness!
At thought of winning it, the heart grow wild,
As his whom more than very affluence
Doth lift from very want!—There stood the maid,
Silent and motionless, with eyes on ground,
Abash'd by the reflection of herself,
Cast back upon her so on every side
From mirrors that express'd her charms indeed,
By showing her their power! Once, only once,
She rais'd her eyes, and lo! they lit on mine,
With look as 'twere of recognition pleas'd;
And in that moment I did feel a thrill
As though our souls embrac'd,—when—spiteful fate!
Just then my steed grew restive, and defied
All skill of rein to stop or rule his course,
And bore me from her!

Bel. Learn'd you not who was
The maid?

Wil. No—not a faculty of thought
Or memory, but was absorb'd in what
She was! As one in jeopardy will lose
Possession of himself, and overlook
Some means of extrication lying at
His very hand; I did not think of that
Till I was out of reach on't. When my steed
Was check'd by some kind hand—I know not whose—
On foot I hasten'd back, but she was gone!
If my first look of her hath been my last,
I'll never care to look on woman more!

Bel. Thy lot is cast! Did I not tell thee so?
To such conclusion ever comes his work,
Who'd make philosophy the rule of love.
Love knows no rule, and never rule knows less
Than when obedience we'd exact from it.
'Tis an uncertain, and a forward guest;
Comes to us when it lists; abides as long
As pleases it; and its own humour takes,
Whatever may be ours! You'd go in quest on't,
And, lo, 'tis with you before setting out;
You'd lay down terms for its sojourning with you,
And here it is, on its own terms, at home;
You'd fain be rid on't, and 'tis fain to stay;
You'd thrust it out of doors, and, only find
The threshold's not your own, the moment love
Sets foot within it. Mean'st thou to seek this maid?

Wil. Ay, through the world!

Bel. I'll help thee in the search;
And if we find the city holds her not,
As far as Rumford bear me company—
Whither, this week, perforce I must repair—
And thence, where'er thou point'st, will I be thine.

Wil. Agreed.

Bel. Yet hold!—Royal Elizabeth,

Her progress to the loyal city makes
Of Norwich. We'll be miss'd; and chiefly thou.
I know thy father, the lord Woodville, looks
To find thee in her train.

Wil. I serve no queen,
But her that's rob'd in russet—wait on none
Beside !

Bel. Come on, then.

Wil. If I find her not,
I'm tenant only for the sexton's house !

[*Exeunt.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE FIRST.

AN APARTMENT IN ALBERT'S HOUSE.

Enter ALBERT and EMMA.

Em. Why sigh'st thou, Albert?

Al. This hath troubl'd me.

On Thursday, said'st thou?

Em. Yes.

Al. I recollect!

I recollect!—Was't not on Ludgate Hill?

Em. On Ludgate Hill.

Al. It was. I recollect

She grasp'd my arm, as with the start, methought,

Of sudden fear, which I accounted for,

As at the self-same moment heard I near

The furious prancing of a fiery steed!

Rode he a steed?

Em. He did.

Al. Then 'twas for him!

The image, say'st thou, of my likeness, ere

That fatal field which robb'd me of my sight,

Now given to thee?

Em. So did she say.

Al. Where is
That likeness?

Em. In her custody. 'Twas that
Betray'd to me the secret of her heart;
She pray'd it from me. Of its costly case
Despoil'd, I gave it her—and wonder'd still
To find her gazing on't, with looks that spoke
A passion more than filial, that did vent
Itself in very tears! the which her breast,
Unwonted heaving, seem'd wth sighs to number!

Al. Such things I've heard.

Em. What, Albert?

Al. I have heard
That subtle passion from a glance hath sprung.
Hath in a moment taken root so deep,
Years could not pluck it up; but in the heart
It grew and grew, tho' beam did never fall
Of sunny hope upon it. Mark'd she how
He was attir'd?

Em. A yeoman did he seem.

Al. That hope is quench'd.

Em. What hope?

Al. Of prouder state,
This thing that seems a weed, had haply prov'd
A flower!

Em. I prithee, how?

Al. That brother, who
Unnatural my lands confiscate seiz'd,
'Tis said is father to a goodly son,
The very image of his uncle, dead,
As they believe me. Hope did kindle up
It might be he she saw. That hope is quench'd!
He seem'd a yeoman?—For this malady
We have a medicine—the knowledge of

Our real state, which still we've hidden from her,
That shall she know to-morrow.

Em. Tell it her,
And quit this wayward life. Thou'st laid by store
Enough. Forsake the land which thee forsakes;
Another one makes thee a franchis'd man,—
Far from the ban of this. There may'st thou take
Thy title, in thy own land forfeited;
And for our fair child find be-fitting mate.

Al. I will not—cannot quit my native land!
Bann'd as I am, 'tis precious to me still.
It is my fathers' land—'tis lov'd for that;
'Tis thine—thy child's—it should be lov'd for you;
It should be lov'd, if only for itself!
'Tis free, it hath no despot, but its laws;
'Tis independent; it can stand alone;
'Tis mighty, 'gainst its enemies, 'tis one.
Where can I find a land the like of it.
Its son, tho' under ban and forfeiture,
Is envied for it. He's the brother of
The free! I cannot quit my native land;
For sight of other land I would not give
The feeling of its breath.—The wall of him
That does not forfeit it, which none may scale,
However proud, unscath'd to do him wrong.
I cannot—will not quit my native land!

Em. Then let us seek some quiet corner on't,
Nor spend on thriftless hope, what husbanded
By wise content would keep us more than rich.

Al. Nor can I that. Who sees his house pull'd down,
And does not strive to build it up again?
Who sees his vessel sunk, and does not look
For other hull to plough the waves anew?
I cannot do't! I've liv'd on the high seas
Of restless life; I would be on them still.

Say I'm unfit for't—I'd be near them still.
The sailor, maim'd or superannuate,
Seeks not an inland home, but on the cliff
His hammock slings, in hearing of the surge
He wont to cleave of yore. Come, lead me forth.
Where's Bess?

Em. She waits for thee without.

Al. Thy hand.

Ne'er fear; we've but to show her what she is,
To cure our fair child of this fantasy.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE SECOND.

A STREET.

THREE SHOPS, ONE IN THE CENTRE & ONE ON
EACH SIDE.

Enter LORD THOMAS and STAFFORD, looking behind them.

L. Tho. On fairer form fell never lover's eye!
Who is she, think you?

Staff. That's instruction, which,
Ere I can teach thee, I must learn myself.

Enter 1st APPRENTICE from one of the Shops.

Good fellow, can'st thou tell what maiden's that?

1st Ap. Ha! Bess! (*runs off.*)

L. Tho. The knave is mad!

2d APPRENTICE enters from 2d Shop.

2d Ap., Who spoke of Bess?

L. Tho. Friend, can you tell us who your maiden is?

2d Ap. Sweet Bess again! (*runs off.*)

Staff. He's mad as t'other knave!

3d APPRENTICE enters from 3d Shop.

3d Ap. Where run they all?

L. Tho. Dost know that maiden, friend?

3d Ap. 'Tis Bess.

L. Tho. What Bess?

3d Ap. Why, Bess of Bethnal Green. (*runs off also.*)

L. Tho. Were rank by beauty rul'd, it were not hard
To fix her place at court!

Staff. A prize, my lord,
For a bold hand!

L. Tho. I think so too, and think
I know the hand would dare to venture for't.
Haste to the slip, where now attends my barge,
Well mann'd. The hands bring to the hither end
Of Thames' Street, there to wait for us, and give me
Advice when thou hast done't. I'll plan some means
To get possession of her,—say, a child,
The beggar stole her—or concert with thee
A mock affray, and then, in the confusion
Make her my prize, before they see she's gone.
Her charms do fire me so, I'd stake my life
For but the chance of winning her!—Away!

Exit Stafford.

*Enter the Beggar, BESS, and the Three Apprentices, with a
crowd of men and women.*

1st Ap. Sweet Bess!

1d *Ap.* Bess, sweetest of the sweet !

3d *Ap.* Bess that once seen, is nothing after sweet !

Al. Good Sirs, my daughter is a silly maid,
Backward, and to be spoken to, asham'd;
And I'm a silly beggar, as you sec.
Pray, let us be, Sirs !

1st *Ap.* Beggar as thou art,
I would I were thy son the church did make !

2d *Ap.* I'd beg with thee, so might I bide with thee.

3d *Ap.* I'd beg for thee, for even such a fee.

Al. Good Sirs, my child's a maiden, poor and low,
Not worthy notice, Sirs, from folk like you !
Come, Bess !

1st *Ap.* To notice her a lord might deign !

2d *Ap.* Deign ! she were worthy notice of a king !

3d *Ap.* To proudest king 'twere pride sweet Bess to know !

Al. Good Sirs, give way.

3d *Ap.* (to 1st *Ap.*) Let go her hand !

1st *Ap.* I will,
When she commands me. (*Bess struggles.*)

3d *Ap.* She commands thee now.
Sweet Bess, I'll back thy nay 'gainst any he !

[*taking her hand, she struggles.*]

2d *Ap.* Thy hand, thou seest, doth likewise make too free,
So thou let go ! They shall not touch thee, Bess,
Instead of two, tho' they were twenty-two !

[*he takes her hand, she struggles.*]

1st *Ap.* Thy hand's as little welcome there as ours,
So visit, short as may be, let it pay.

3d *Ap.* I'll make it short or long as pleases me.

3d *Ap.* Thou wilt ?

2d *Ap.* I will !

Al. Who dares to touch thee, Bess ?
Let go my child, Sirs ! Beggar as I am,

His daughter's not more precious to a king,
Than mine to me!

L. Tho. For shame! for shame! to use
The daughter of a sightless father so!

2d Ap. What is't to thee? Would'st thou make up to
Keep to thy dames in satin that do mince; Bess?
Leave homely gowns to us. I'll not be brow'd
By any cap and feather in the land.

1st Ap. Nor I.

2d Ap. Nor I.

L. Tho. Wag you your tongues at me!

2d Ap. Will not a cock on his own dunghill crow!
Sir, I'm apprentice to a citizen;
Have title to the ground I stand upon,
Where I'll maintain my right 'gainst any he
That rates me in the hearing of sweet Bess!

1st Ap. And I'm the nephew, gentle Sir, of one;
Was bred upon the ground I stand upon,
Where I'll speak up to gentleman or lord,
In Bessy's sight that thinks to humble me!

3d Ap. And of a citizen am I the son,
Church-warden, Sir, and common-council-man,
Moreover, cousin to an alderman,
And born upon the ground I stand upon;
Where I will carry bonnet to the duke
That frowns upon me when sweet Bess is by!

L. Tho. Thou'dst find thy mate, had I my varlet here

2d A. Thy varlet would be fitter mate to thee!

L. Tho. How, Sirrah? (*putting his hand to his sword.*)

2d Ap. Draw thy weapon, and come on!

Enter STAFFORD.

Staff. Put up!—We're ready.—Hold, or all is marr'd!

1st Cit. (entering.) What, Son!

2d Cit. (entering.) How, nephew!

3d Cit. (entering.) My apprentice here!
Sword out, and bludgeons brandish'd! Beadle, ho!
Gentles and all, we'll have you cag'd for this!

L. Tho. (putting up his sword.) Look to your own jay's
first! To cage with them!
See to their prating! They are saucy birds,
Whose necks 'twere well to ring, good citizens,
If you would have your betters walk your streets!
[*Exeunt Lord Thomas and Stafford.*]

1st Cit. Son, thou hast half my custom lost to-day;
Worth half the city was that lord to me.
Hence to thy desk, nor quit it for a week!

3d Ap. They'll watch, sweet Bess, who'll bar me sight
of thee! [Aside and exit]

2d Cit. The other is a knight, my customer,
Whose mere good-will was worth me pounds a year.
Nephew, be sure I'll clip thy wings for this.
Hence to thy counter, where I'll see thee chain'd.

2d Ap. 'Twould need it, Bess, from thee to keep me there!
[Aside and exit.]

3d Cit. Follow them, Sirrah!

1st Ap. I will follow none
But thee, sweet Bess! [Aside and exit.]

1st Cit. Whom, neighbours, have we here?
Is this the Beggar, think you, and his child,
That sets the city wild?

2d Cit. It must be they.

3d Cit. The Beggar's daughter!—Vagrant, dost thou
right,
To fill our streets with brawls and idleness?
Since thou hast walk'd them with thy child bewitch'd,
Our sons have turn'd from industry to sloth;
From rule to restiveness! Our books unkept;
Unrun our errands; our accounts mis-summ'd;

Our orders late, forgot, mis-executed;
 We lose our trade, that more 'twould profit us
 To shut than open shop. What can'st thou say,
 Why to the beadle's charge I give thee not?

1st & 2d Cits. He can say nothing.

Bess. Yes, he can, good Sirs!

3d Cit. What can he say?

Bess. What I would say for him—
 That he is blind—that I'm his only guide;
 His only means, the harp whereon he plays,
 To which he sings a fit; which, when he tires—
 And that is soon, for you may see he's old—
 Must I take up.

1st Cit. Why, neighbour, where's thy rage?

3d Cit. Neighbour, I think 'tis gone along with thine.

2d Cit. And mine's too social far, to stay behind!

1st Cit. We'll make her sing a strain, and let her go.

3d Cit. Come, Beggar, play, and let thy daughter sing;
 And freely go thy ways.

Bess. What shall I sing?

Al. "*The blind man's at the door.*"

The Beggar plays, BESS sings.

The blind man's at the door,
 And wont you let him in?
 He plays the harp, he'll spare no pains,
 Your favour for to win.
 He'll sing you fits, one, two, or three,
 And he'll ask you a groat—no more;
 And, grudge you a groat, he'll be thankful for less—
 The blind man's at the door.

He'll sing you stories sad,
 He'll sing you stories gay;

THE BEGGAR'S DAUGHTER

And, call as often as you please,
 He will not say you nay.
 If you fill him a cup, he's a happy blind man,
 As oft he has been before;
 But grudge you that grace, he's contented with none—
 The blind man's at the door.

The blind man's at the door,
 And shelter none has he;
 The sky doth smile, or it doth frown,
 But which he cannot see!
 If you welcome him in, what cares he for the sky?
 It may shine, or it may pour;
 But grudge you that grace, wet or dry, he must on!
 The blind man's at the door.

[In the course of the song enter from different parts the three Apprentices, followed respectively by the wives of the three citizens.]

1st Cit. I do believe in witchcraft!

2d Cit. So do I!

3d Cit. What! has she stopp'd?—I thought she did sing on!

1st Cit. (*Seeing his son*) How son!

1st Wife. How husband! what has turn'd thy brain?

2d Cit. (*Seeing his nephew*) my nephew!

2d Wife. And your wife! what do you here?

3d Cit. (*seeing his apprentice*) What, my apprentice!

3d Wife. And his mistress, Sir!—

Art in thy dotage husband? art thou so?

To follow after beggar quean like this!

2d Wife. At fifty-five art thou the boy to play?

1st Wife. Must thou become a gallant at three score?

Enter BEADLE.

Bead. What riot's this? The Beggar's Daughter here!
'Tis vain with her to talk of quiet streets.

1st Wife. To workhouse with her!

2d Wife. Bridewell would be best!

3d Wife. I'd lock her up in Newgate, so would I.

Bead. Come beggar! (*approaching the beggar.*)

Bess. Lay not hold upon him, Sir!

We fain would on, Sir, if we would be let.

If now you let us go, we promise you

We'll ne'er be seen within the city more!

Good Sirs, don't bring us into trouble, pray!

Let the blind beggar and his daughter be!

Good day, good Sirs—we thank you and good day.

[*Exeunt the Beggar and Bess.*]

Bead. Best let them go!—Ere trouble thing so fair
I'd break my staff and lay my office down.

1st Ap. (*after a pause*) I'll follow to Mile-end! [*Exit.*]

2d Ap. And so will I! [*Exit.*]

3d Ap. And I! [*Exit.*]

1st Cit. Nay wife I cannot leave my son! [*Exit.*]

2d Cit. Nor I my nephew! [*Exit.*]

3d Cit. Nor my 'prentice I! [*Exit.*]

1st Wife. After them beadle!

2d Wife. Do thy duty now!

3d Wife. To prison with them, Beggar—Quean—and
all!

[*Exeunt; the crowd following.*]

SCENE THIRD.

TEMPLE BAR.

The houses on each side adorned with cloths of silk or velvet, gold or silver, hanging from the upper windows.

A crowd of Citizens, men and women, assembled.

Off. Stand back, Sirs! stand back there I say!—Why press ye forward? Back there! Back! Keep order till her highness pass.

1st Cit. Will it be long, Sir, ere she come?

Off. To answer that must I know the measure of your patience. Stretches it to some five minutes hence, I dare warrant you she will be here quickly; for 'tis a quarter and upwards beyond the time she appointed to set out from Westminster.

2d Cit. Is't to Norwich, Sir, her highness makes her progress this time. *[shout without.]*

Off. To Norwich 'tis Sir—Peace! Her Highness comes. Each keep his place, nor press upon the other, so one and all will see the sight. Here comes the Lord Mayor with the aldermen and council, to greet her highness—More room there! Stand back! Stand back!

[The Lord Mayor, &c. enter from the gate. Enter Procession; Soldiers, Gentlemen-Pensioners, band of Gentlemen, band of Knights, band of Barons, Trumpeters and Heralds. The Queen followed by a train of Ladies, closed up with guards.]

[The Lord Mayor, &c. advance and kneel to the Queen.]

Mayor. May't please your Majesty, with duteous knees,
That for our loving and right loyal hearts
Do truly vouch, as would our tongues for both ;
Our happy privileges, of the which
Your gracious sceptre, the high guardian is,
Thus lowly at your highness' feet we lay ;
And with fair greeting pray to welcome you
To your good city here of London.

Queen. Freely
Do we accept your greeting, citizens
Of London ; of our loyal cities, chief ;
The princess fair of commerce ; that defies
The world to show her peer ; whose merchantmen
Do throng the seas with gallant fleets, the which
To float, the treasures of kings might brag !
The privileges, at our feet you lay,
We pray you to resume ; and truly guard
For her behoof, who, in her subjects' weal,
Doth love to boast she still locks up her own !

Mayor. Our duties ever on your Highness wait !

Queen. Proceed !

Al. (*without*) The Queen ! the Queen !—Where !—
Where's the Queen.

Off. Stand back !

Queen. Make way !—Who calls upon the Queen ?

Off. So please your majesty, a beggar-man !
Stand back !

Al. The Queen ! the Queen !

Off. Stand back I say !

Queen. Hold, Sirrah ! Dare not stop my subject's way
That comes in suffering to me !—Did I, when
My right did crown me, and I pass'd along—
My way beset with subjects that more thick
Did throng me with their blessings than their eyes—
My chariot frequent stay, that I might take

Their gifts of nosegays from poor women's hands?
 And shall I now pass on, nor stop to hear
 A poor man's prayer!—Let him approach, whate'er
 He is!

[*The officer makes way for Albert who enters.*]

Al. Lead—Lead me to her Highness' feet! (*kneels*)
 Justice, Great Queen! Justice and Mercy!

Queen. How!

Mercy doth stay the hand of Justice; Justice
 Prevent the hand of Mercy—Ask'st thou then
 For both?

Al. For mercy I'd implore for one
 Whose high offence, hath long contrition half
 Atoned for, half, the loss of sight—his just
 And heavy penalty for swerving duty!
 Justice I'd ask on one, whose daring wrong,
 In open day, hath robb'd me of my child—
 A virgin, gracious Queen of beauty rare
 Although her father's eyes ne'er vouch'd for it!

Queen. But went she of her will?

Al. No! No!—by force.

Just now!—i'th' public street!—in open day!—
 Torn from her father's side, who readily
 Had given his life that minute for the use,
 For but a minute, of his eyes again!

Queen. Thy tears old man do better serve than sparks,
 To kindle up our wrath! Know'st thou the name
 Of the offender?

Al. No.

Queen. Nor rank?

Al. Nor rank.

Unless a ring that in the struggle from
 His finger came, as I instinctively
 Did grapple with him, be a clue to find it.

Queen. Show it us!—'Tis not a stranger to us, nor yet

Acquaintance such that we at once can name
 Its owner. Leave it in our custody.
 What to thyself alone relates, we'll at
 Our leisure learn ; what to thy child, at once
 We'll give our care to—Tell us by what name
 Best thou art known, or title ?

Al. The Blind Beggar
 Of Bethnal-Green.

Queen. Thy daughter's name ?

Al. 'Tis Bess.

Queen. Our own!—Of beauty rare thou say'st ?

Al. Most rare !

Queen. And good ?

Al. Most good !

Queen (to attendant) Send proclamation straight
 In all directions : “ He who harbours, with
 Or 'gainst her will, this Beggar's daughter fair,
 Must safe surrender her to our command ;
 Or, though he were the proudest in my realm,
 A heavy penalty shall wait upon him.
 Whate'er his state, owns he unplighted hand,
 He shall repair his wrong ; and find a wife
 Where he would make a paramour ! We say it,
 And we shall keep our word, or doff our crown !
 Look to that sightless man ! Whoe'er he is,
 Our pleasure 'tis he waits upon us—On !
 The glory it shall be of Bess's reign
 Her lowest subject, if his cause is right,
 Hath 'gainst her highest odds ; for, beggar e'en,
 He still shall have his Queen to side with him !

[Exeunt through the gate.]

Enter YOUNG SMALL *and* PETER *newly attired.*

Y. Small. Plague, on it, Peter ; we're too late you see !
 Had we o'erta'en them while they parley'd here,

An easy matter had it been for me
To mingle with the train, and walk along,
As one of them. To follow them is all
That's left me now. So ! let's take breath awhile.
Peter thou'lt ruin me ! Is that a way
For serving-man to carry him?—Consider
Thy master, Peter, is a gentleman.

Peter. To keep in mind on't do I all I can.

Y. Small. I say thou dost not, else would it appear.

Peter. It shall appear.

Y. Small. See that it do so then—
Especially when thou dost go abroad.
Then, carry thus thy head ; stand with an air ;
Walk with a gait, as thou wast somebody ;
And when thou speak'st, thou must speak up, like one
That values not who hears—but not to me.
To me, good Peter, do thou none of these !
Speak small to me ; wear thus thy head to me ;
Stand thou not with an air, when I am by ;
Nor, when my eye's upon thee, move with gait,
Of somebody ! Thou'rt ever nobody
In presence of thy master !—minding still
To bear thee like a gentle serving-man.

Peter. I'll mind.

Y. Small. And do so !—and remember too
When I do sit, and thou dost wait on me,
Thou layest not thy hand upon my chair !
But stand at distance from't—nor yet in line,
But good a foot behind the rearmost leg ;
Not in advance of that a barleycorn !
And balance not thy body on one leg,
With knee of t'other negligently bent,
As if it said “I care not !” 'Tis not meet !
But stand on both, as every joint of thee
Did know me for thy master—not astride !

But heel to heel !—And keep thy finger from
Thy button hole—but not to cram it in
Thy poke !—Nor yet on hip to rest it !—’twere
As thou would’st say, “ I think myself a lord ! ”—
Thou would’st not fold thine arms !—Field martial, Peter,
Could do no more !—Do nothing with thine arms
But let them hang ! There ! Seem’st thou now indeed
A serving-man.

Peter. Will that content you ?

Y. Small. Yes.

But mark !—Thou’st play’d with me at coits and loggats,
No more of that !

Peter. I’ll mind.

Y. Small. Thou hast stood by
When I have play’d, and when I’ve tripp’d the pins
Or made the shot, hast clapp’d me on the back,
And cried “ well done ! ”—No more of that !

Peter. I’ll mind.

Y. Small. And when I have order’d me a tankard out,
And given it thee to hold, thou more than once
Hast quaff’d it off to my good luck—Be sure
No more of that !

Peter. I’ll try and mind—But, Sir—
Since so I must accost thee—What avail
The gait and air of gentle serving-man,
Without the pocket should belong to one ?
Look there !

Y. Small. What’s there ?

Peter. A melancholy rap !
A black-fac’d, copper sixpence ! add to which
A button without shank, and you sum up
The pocket of your gentle serving-man !
I ne’er can do without allowances.

Y. Small. Allowances !—What wages got you from
My father, Peter ?

Peter. 'Twere a cunning clerk
Could count them.—Purse was never made, would wear
With hoarding them—To coin them took it not
Gold, silver, no nor brass. I serv'd him for
My bed and board, that board and bed were none,
But shifts for them ; a jerkin in the year
And doublet—old apparel new made up ;
Hose, when the feet had walk'd away from them ;
Shoes whose last mending had the cobbler brought
To his last wits ; and hat that gap'd to see
Its crown was gone, with what good luck besides
Might send me.

Y. Small. And thou nam'st allowances !
Do I not promise thee a pound a year ?
Jerkin and doublet to provide thee with,
The thirtieth penny on the counter rung,
The knell of half-a-crown ! Hose got I thee,
With feet unto them, newly vamp'd, and darn'd !
And from the cordiner himself, direct,
Wast thou not shod ? Nor was thy head forgot ;
With thy well-furnish'd trunk to make it match,
Did I not treat it to a crown-whole hat ?
Nor yet at outlay stopp'd, so ruinous,
But in the hat a comely feather stuck,
At charge of twice a groat ! No more of this !
Believe when thou'rt well off—There's twopence for thee !
To show thee, that thou serv'st a gentleman !
Dream'st thou some times ?

Peter. I do.

Y. Small. What's the best dream
A man can dream ?

Peter. They say 'tis hanging.

Y. Small. E'er
Dream'dst thou of that ?

Peter. I dream'd of it last week.

Y. Small. Thy dream's come out!—Thou art a lucky man,

But knew'st thou it—Come on!—Content thee, and
Thou shalt have pence!—Mind how thou bear'st thyself!
Well done! But keep to that!—So!—Follow me.

[*Exeunt.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE FIRST.

THE QUEEN'S ARMS.

Enter HOSTESS *and* RALPH.

Hos. Now have I told thee all—how she came here
On Tuesday night, sore faint, and travel-worn,
When thou at Epping wast upon the roam;
How from her home by bold and lawless men
She had been forc'd; how she escap'd their hands;
How, when she reach'd her parents' roof again,
Deserted 'twas—its tenants, doubtless gone
In quest of her; how, knowing not what way
To go, she put her trust in Heaven to guide her,
Which brought her to our door!

Ralph. Inform'd she thee
Who were her parents?

Hos. No; I ask'd, but saw
The question troubled her, so ask'd no more.
I see thou think'st her fair.—Now, mark me, Ralph.
Thou'rt less sedate, I know, than thou art wild,—
I also think there's in thy heart a check
Of ruth and honesty, that draws thee back

When passion cross their bounds would have thee wing.
Beware, my son, her beauty tempts thee not
To do her wrong! She's poor—she has not friend
Of right she here can call so—has not home,
Save what a stranger's roof supplies her with;
The labour of her hands is all her means;
Her virtue is their strength—who'd rob them on't,
Were he my son, he were not villain only,
But coward mean, to boot!

Ralph. Nay, mother, nay;
I'm not that lack-grace yet! Give thou consent,
I'm wiv'd to-morrow, for sweet Bessy's sake.

Hos. I'll think on't, Ralph; meantime bestir thee, son.
Look to the gentleman since Wednesday last
Took up his quarters here.

Ralph. The gentleman?
My shoe's a gentleman!

Hos. How, Sirrah! This
Thy manners?

Ralph. Mother, I did overhear—

Hos. Did'st what! I'll have no list'ners in my house!—
No eaves-droppers!—no ears that wait on key-holes!
Who take their quarters up at the Queen's arms,
Shall have their secrets, as their luggage, safe!
Fie on thee, Ralph! No more on't! Mind thyself!
Thy mother's hard-earn'd gains not more were won
By thrift than honesty; whom they enrich
Must honest be as thrifty—so be thou.
My son is he, not of my blood, that's drop,
But portion of my heart. Not so, I'd take
A hind that is, to be thy mother's heir!

[*Exit Hostess.*

Ralph. Look to thy birthright, Ralph. Avails it not
To be thy mother's son that nature made,

Thou must be offspring of her humour too !
 Is't fault of thine that thou art not a wall ?
 That thou dost hear when men before thee tell
 Their loose-kept secrets ? Gentleman forsooth !
 My gentleman's gentleman ! The scrub of him !
 The helper o' the scrub ! a rap, was nail'd
 To some vile counter, has been taken thence,
 And the base metal coin'd anew, to pass
 For piece of honest gold ! 'Twont pass with me !
 He trusts to make his fortune by the priest—
 Of some rich dame the favour sweet, to win—
 And thereunto he follows the Queen's court ;
 But stopping, on his way, at Rumford, here ;
 Sets eye upon the linnet I would lime,
 And tarries at our house: but lest he spoil
 My sport, I've pointed out the bush to him
 Where sits a gold-finch—but a painted one—
 Our Kate that's vow'd to wed a gentleman—
 Her do I palm on him for noble maid,
 Heiress of gold and lands, from forced match
 Escap'd, and couching here in humble guise
 To shun pursuit.—Ha ! here she comes.—Good day,

Enter KATE.

Sweet Kate !

Kate. Hold off, I'm Kate too sweet for thee !

Ralph. Indeed ! When do we call thee wife, sweet Kate ?

Kate. When thou hold'st stirrup to my husband !

Ralph. How !

Will nothing less content thee ? Marry Kate !

Marry thy match, or count to die a maid.

Kate. My match is he that fits my thought, not thine.

Ralph. Thy match is he that fits thy fortune, Kate.

Kate. Not so, when I my fortune am above.

Ralph. Their fortune who're above, oft fall below.

Kate. Leave me to look to that.

Ralph. Look to it then.

Thy new year's gift I'll double for thee, Kate,
If ere the year comes round, thou curtsey not
The wife of honest hind.

Kate. The hind I'll wed
Thou'lt touch thy bonnet to.

Ralph. Ay shall I, Kate,
When he to me doffs his.

Kate. Doffs his to thee !
He first shall doff his head !

Ralph. Nay, Kate, be friends !
Not only do I wish thee well to wed,
But, if I could, would help thee, pretty Kate.
And I can help thee if thou'rt in the mood.

Kate. What ! in the mood to help thee to a jest ?

Ralph. Thyself be judge ! The gentleman, came here
On Wednesday—he throws glances at thee, Kate—
Is that a jest ? I've heard, thy cousin, Kate,
Was cousin's cousin to the cousin of
An earl, sweet Kate—I've told him so. Is that
A jest ? Thou know'st how windfalls come—how men,
Were ragged knaves one day, the next has seen
To strut as robed lords—how oft the tree
Of noble family hath wither'd, branch
By branch, till none to bear its honors left.
They've gone to cover some poor distant graft,
The parent stock ne'er threw its shadow on !
Why may't not hap to thee ? I think it may—
I wish it may—and as 'tis easy, Kate,
To fancy what we wish, I've told him, Kate,
To titles and revenues thou art heir !
Is that a jest ? Let but thy bearing back
My giving out, I'd marvel not, if ere
A quarter of a year—a month—a week,

I doff my bonnet to thy spouse indeed.

Is that a jest?

Kate. Ralph, thou'rt an honest lad!

Ralph. When thou repair'st to church, may I, sweet Kate,
Make bold to kiss thee when the knotting's done?

Kate. I shall not mind, for old acquaintance, Ralph.

Ralph. And when thou'rt married, may I sometimes call?

Kate. Ay may'st thou, Ralph.

Ralph. How often? Once a year?

Kate. I'll not be angry, Ralph, if it be twice.

Ralph. How kind thou art—and when I call, sweet Kate,
Wilt bid the lackey let me in?

Kate. I will.

Ralph. And order master Ralph a cup of sack,
To drink thy health, while in the hall he stands?

Kate. As sure as I shall be a lady, Ralph.

Ralph. Thou shalt be married to a gentleman!
And here he comes—observe him, bonny Kate,
The visage, figure, habit, air, and walk
Of gentleman! To note his only gait
A man would say, or he lack'd brains, there goes
At least a handsome thousand pounds a year!
When thou shalt call him spouse! Away, my Kate.
Love in his heart be sure hath taken root;
See how I'll make it grow and come to fruit.
Bear thee as gentlewoman, Kate—That's right!
Go proudly, Kate, and not as chamber-maid!
Of maids thou shalt be mistress! Well done, Kate!

[*Exit Kate.*]

Here comes, indeed, my gentleman, from top
To toe new-furnish'd, as on conquest bent.

[*retires up the stage.*]

Enter YOUNG SMALL.

Y. Small. Debate it thus. What's love? It is not land

Or gold; 'tis not attire or tenement;
Or meat or drink. What is the worth on't then?
Nothing! It makes not wise; for these are things
That wise men covet, and 'twould counsel me
To part with them: it makes not great—great men
Hath love undone: 'Tis not content; I ne'er
Saw lover yet, but he was wo-begone!
Its signs are willows, darts and bleeding hearts!
I'll none on't I'm resolv'd! Sweet mistress Bess!

Ralph. Sweet mistress Kate thou mean'st.

Y. Small. Right, master Ralph.

Yet mistress Bess is sweet! But what of that?
'Tis fit a gentleman a lady wed—
So Kate's the maid for me. I'll conquer love!
Love's no small thing to conquer. Men fall sick
For love, go mad for love; hang, drown themselves!
But love doth meet its match when it meets me!
You see I'm ready, Ralph.

Ralph. I see you are.

Ay, that's the way to go a-wooing.

Y. Small. What,

It strikes you?

Ralph. Yes!

Y. Small. The jerkin's a new cut,

Or else the tailor's perjur'd—oath he took
It should be made as never jerkin was!

Ralph. His oath he has kept!

Y. Small. You mark my doublet too?

Ralph. Else lack'd I eyes.

Y. Small. And how the sleeves are slash'd?

Ralph. 'Tis slashing work indeed! She must have heart
Of stone, gives she not in.

Y. Small. A fine effect!

And then my hat—what think you of the set?

Ralph. A gallant set—a very gallant set!
Most valiantly turn'd up!

Y. Small. The feather red!
Blood-red! and nearly of a rapier's length;
The loop of warlike steel. That, what with loop,
Feather and set, methinks it is a hat
Cries—"Touch me not!"

Ralph. Methinks it is.

Y. Small. 'Twas made
To special order.

Ralph. So 'twould seem.

Y. Small. You know
They like a gallant bearing. I would look
A very Hector when I go to woo!

Ralph. And thou hast hit it.

Y. Small. On your honour, now?

Ralph. Else never man hit any thing.

Y. Small. Indeed!

I thank you, master Ralph. I'm glad you're pleas'd.
You have a taste! Beshrew me but you have!
How would you have me wear my rapier?—So?
Or so?

Ralph. Why, so—it better shows the hilt.

Y. Small. A pretty hilt!—I bought it for the hilt.
The cutler would have palm'd upon me one
Of better blade! He thought he had a fool
To deal with!—Buy a rapier for the blade!
Who shows the blade?

Ralph. Most true.

Y. Small. I think I'll do.

Ralph. No doubt on't—hie thee now
Into the laundry, where thou'lt find her—Ply
Thy suit,—Strong castle's taken by surprise.
Say thou hast bought the ring—she'll say the word,
And straight you go to church!

Y. Small. Sweet mistress Bess!

Ralph. What! mistress Bess again?

Y. Small. Sweet mistress Kate I mean.

Ralph. Ay, keep to that.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE SECOND.

QUEEN'S ARMS.

Enter MRS. TRUSTY,

Hos. All's right and tidy! Each thing in its place,
And cleverly put out of hand. No cup,
Tankard or flagon, but its face might show
To polish'd silver, rich and bright as 'tis.
There's sure a virtue in her touch, that leaves
All things it meets as ne'er they look'd before!
Luck hath she brought with her. Since here she came
No house in Rumford holds its head so high
As the Queen's arms, for balm of sparkling ale,
Cordial of sack, and nectar of bright wine!
Would she were wife to Ralph! We cannot hope
To keep the treasure long, that's coveted
By all who see it, and by right's not ours;
But yet, who is she? Ralph's my son; and heir
To good a hundred pounds a-year, besides
His father's house and land. Her courtesy might
An heiress' self vouchsafe to make to Ralph.
When he should wed, I ever look'd at least

To give my blessing to some doctor's, squire's,
 Or curate's daughter. Wed him shall I to
 One knows not whom? I'll question her more close.
 His father, when he wiv'd, took home his match,
 And so must he. She comes. (*Bess sings without.*) No
 need to keep
 Blackbird or thrush, while she is in the house,
 So sweet and active is her pretty throat.
 What's that she looks thus constant at, whene'er
 She thinks herself alone; but when observ'd,
 Doth ever quickly nestle in her breast?

*Enter BESS, with her father's picture, which she frequently
 examines while she sings.*

"What shall I give you for your heart?
 My pretty chamber-maid!
 What shall I give you for your heart?
 I've land, I've gold, with ought I'll part,
 To make you mine," he said.

"The maid, kind Sir, whose heart is sold,
 A-well-a-day, may sing;
 The maid, kind Sir, whose heart is sold,
 Sells more than worth of land or gold—
 Unless a golden ring!"

"Say ought but that, my bonny queen,
 And thou'rt my own," he said.
 "Say ought but that, my bonny queen,"—
 "Who gives not that," she said, "is e'en
 Beneath a chamber-maid."

"Take that, take that, and all beside!
 Be mine! be mine!" he said;

Take that, take that, and all beside!
 She's worth me, that must be my bride,
 Tho' but a chamber-maid!

[*At the conclusion of the Song, the Hostess approaches and steals a look at the picture.*]

Hos. Whose picture's that, my Bess?

Bes. My father's,

Hos. Then

Was never father better lov'd than thine!
 Nay, blush not, that thou lov'st thy father well!
 Show't me.—He is a father to be lov'd;
 No wonder thou shouldst keep it next thy heart;
 I well could take't to mine. Thou blushest more
 And more. Thou silly wench. There, put it up;
 I like to hear thee sing, my pretty Bess;
 'Tis gladness to my heart!—Art happy, Bess,
 To live with me?

Bess. As far as happiness
 Can live with Bess,—her parents lost—herself
 Unable to provide her home or friend.

Hos. Not so, my pretty Bess! Herself can best
 Provide her these. No customer that comes
 To the Queen's arms, and hath unmistress'd house,
 But would be glad if Bess its mistress were—
 Knew he her history.

Bess. (*aside.*) Her history!

Hos. One likes to know
 Whence people come—who people are—their birth
 And parentage. Wast thou a lady born,
 I could not love thee better than I do.
 But loving thee so well, I'd know who 'tis
 So well I love. Who art thou, pretty Bess?

Bess. (*aside.*) If I do say I am a beggar's child,

The door that took me in, may thrust me out !
 If ought beside, I speak what is not truth,
 And that I'll never speak ! You think me good ;
 You find me willing ;—useful in the house—
 Not knowing who I am. To teach you that,
 More good, more willing, useful, makes me not ;
 Then do not seek to know't. I dare be bound,
 If cause I give you not for more content,
 I'll give you none for less !

Hos. Where mystery is,
 Doubt is. We hide what we do fear to show.
 If I do come of honest kind, care I
 Who knows my father's name ? I'd cry it from
 The steeple top ! To be a friend, we needs
 Must find a friend. My friend is she alone
 That trusts me. If my love's not worth as much,
 Better I keep it to myself. Fair brow
 Thou hast, and open too ! I'ween thy heart's
 As fair—but why is't not as open—Bess !
 Why, whether goest thou ?

Bess. (*who while the hostess has been speaking, has put on her cloak and bonnet.*) I know not, but
 I know I must go hence !—you're right—'Tis fit
 One know whom they do lodge—whom they do love,
 'Tis little to ask that ! Alas for them
 That are not masters of so small a boon !
 They may be question'd—wonder were they not.
 They may be doubted—they cannot complain,
 They may lack friend—they've but themselves to blame !
 Farewell—Thanks !—Thanks ! much thanks—'Twas all
 agift !

The wind and rain on which you shut the door
 That let me in—had just as much a right
 To enter it as I. I am rested now,
 Refresh'd and strengthen'd—every foot I go
 I'll bless you that I am so !

Hos. Leave me Bess!

That shalt thou never!—Give me off thy cloak!

Prevent me not! Thy bonnet I'll untie,

Or never more may I tie on my own!

Ah! Bess, dost mind me?—Care I who thou art?

Or doubt I thee?—Or am I not thy friend?

Nay if thou leav'st the house I leave it too!

I'll have no house that does not roof thy head!

For ever live with me! (*embraces her*) Want'st thou a
right?

A right then shalt thou have.—Ralph loves thee Bess,

Whoe'er thou art thou shall be wife to Ralph!

Nay answer not! I say I'll have it so!

See if I love thee now—Away! Away!

Here's company.—Leave me to answer them.

[*Exit Bess, confused.*]

Enter LAST, MORTICE, and MALLET.

Walk in good master Mallet; Gentlemen

Walk in! you're welcome. What will't please you have?

We've choice for all, and nought but's of the best.

Mal. We'll taste your ale good Mistress Trusty. Hark!

How does your pretty bar maid? Did you speak

As you did promise, a good word for me?

Hos. I did.

Mal. And was she pleas'd?

Hos. 'Tis hard to say

When maids are pleas'd. When I myself was one,

What most I seem'd was oft what least I felt.

Mor. Your ear, kind hostess—gave you mistress Bess
The message I did send her?

Hos. Word for word.

Mor. What word did she return thee?

Hos. Marry none!

Bess is a prudent wench. Maid's thoughts go cheap

That can be had for asking ! Little worth,
Yet hoarded charily, great price they bring!

I found it so myself when I was young.

Last. A word, good Mistress Trusty, when you're done.

Hos. I'm at your service now, Sir.

Last. Handed you

My gift to Bess ?

Hos. I did.

Last. And took she it ?

Hos. She took it not. 'Tis here for you again.

Presents to maids are earnest. Take they them

They next should take the donors. Had not I

Thought so in my free days, I should have won

A dower in gifts !—You shall be serv'd anon.

Mor. I guess you've come bad speed.

Last. Hast thou come better ?

Mal. The fault's our own. Love's not a game at law

Wherein the player is not he that stakes ?

I'll play my game myself, and ask sweet Bess

To church to-morrow !

Last. So will I.

Mor. And I,

And him to whom she curtsies shall the rest

Give joy to.

Last. Be it so.

Mal. I say the same,

And joy will sure be his.

[*Exeunt.*

[*BESS crosses the stage after them with a tankard.*

Enter HOSTESS *conducting* BELMONT *and* WILFORD.

Hos. Walk in, walk in, I'll show you to a room.

Wil. And please you get my chamber ready straight,
I will at once to bed.

Hos. I'll see to't, Sir.

He early goes to rest—He must be ill.

Love-sick, perhaps? There's comfort for him then,
Like all his sex he'll soon get over that.

Bel. Hostess!

Hos. Your will?

Bel. I'd try your wine; Is't good?

Hos. The very best!

Please you sit down, good Sirs. [*Places chairs and exit.*]

Bel. Still wrapt as ever!

Rouse thee, Wilford; rouse thee!

Shake off this lethargy and be a man!

Take faster hold of hope! We'll find her yet:

But should we fail, what then?—Art thou to pine

To death? This malady is of the head

More than the heart. Believe it can be cur'd,

Thou'lt find 'twill be so. Be thyself again!

Be free! But once beheld may be forgot.

Wil. Yes, if a thing that any fellow hath.

I may forget a diamond, can I find

Another one as rich: but show me one

That is the paragon of all the mine,

And try if that's forgot, though seen but once!

Say that but once I see a beauteous star,

I may forget it for another star;

But say but once I do behold the sun,

And name the time will blot its image out!

Bel. But of a single draught of love to die!

Wil. Why not? There is your poison, strong and
One kind admits of antidote—one, not. [*weak;*]

One by the drachm, one by the scruple kills;

Another, by the grain—for not in bulk,

But subtleness the lethal virtue lies:—

So are there kinds in love! A dozen shafts

May gall him, and the bounding deer run on;

But one shot home, behold he's down at once!

[*Bess enters with wine, which she places on a table*]

at some distance from Belmont and Wilford. The former sees her at once, and regards her with an expression of fixed admiration. The latter remaining in a state of perfect abstraction.

Bel. E'er saw'st thou thing so fair?

Wil. What speak'st thou of?

Bel. Yon maid that waits on us.

Wil. I've seen! I've seen!

Bel. This is to dream!

He sleeps! I'll wake him, then.—My pretty maid,
Hand thou the cup to yonder gentleman.

[Bess, whose eyes have just fallen upon Wilford, stands gazing upon him, apparently insensible to every thing else.]

What ails the girl? Does she not hear? She's fixed
As statue to the pedestal. What is't
She gazes at?—As I do live, 'tis he!
Commend me to a sallow cheek!—She's smit,
If Cupid is a marksman!—Maids, I've heard,
Like books they weep over; the which, the more
They're made to melt, the more do they devour!
See how she reads him!—Marry, she will get
The book by heart!

Bess. 'Tis he! 'Tis he!—How's this?
I feel at home while I do look on him.
Seem near me hearts I know. I could believe
The roof our own. I scarce would start—were now
The door to ope,—to see my mother's face!
Yet what is he to me? Acquaintance of
My eyes, whom ne'er they met but once before!

Bel. A shot! A shot!—Cupid is in the vein.

Bess. (*Drawing her father's picture from her bosom.*)

How like!—How like!—How very—very like!
There only wants a smile upon the lip—
I think the lip more sweet the smile away—

Fie, 'tis my father's lip! My father then,
 As often I have heard my mother say,
 Just new had won my mother's love—I ween
 My mother then smiled too! Who ought to smile,
 If not the maid that's woo'd by him she'd wed?
 Her Bess will never wed!

Bel. A sigh!—Be sure
 The fawn is struck.

Bess. Just now I felt at home,
 And now I feel a thousand miles from home!
 Things, strange before, are now still stranger grown,
 And he most strange of all—the farthest off—
 The least expected ever to be near—
 The sight of whom brought home so near to Bess!
 What's Bess's home to him? He'd pass the door
 And would not know she dwelt there! If he did,
 Would never thank the latch to let him in!
 He has a home and friends that love him there—
 Friends that he loves.—Poor Bess is far from home—
 Was never farther—never half so far!

Hos. (without.) Why, Bess! What, Bess!

Bel. How deep she is entranc'd!

HOSTESS enters and goes up to her.

Hos. Why, Bess, what ails thee, child?

Bess. (abstractedly.) Anon! Anon!

I'll do't this moment.

Hos. Do it? What wilt do?

Bess. (confused and hurriedly.) Whate'er you bid.

Hos. Why, what has happen'd to her!

Look to the bar till I come back again.

Why, Bess, do'st hear me that thou do'st not move?

Bess. I'll go this moment. *(confused.)* Where am I
 to go?

Hos. The girl's bewilder'd! "Where am I to go!"

Can'st tell me what I said to thee just now? [said'st,—

Bess. Thou said'st, I think—or I mistake—thou
Thou said'st—perhaps I did not rightly hear;
Thinking of one thing, one forgets at times
Another thing—Thou said'st—It was not that—
Nor that—In sooth, I know not what thou said'st!

Hos. I knew't. I bade thee go and mind the bar.

Bess. I'll do't. [*Still looking in the direction of Wilford.*]

Hos. Thou'lt do't! And go'st thou not to do't?
Yonder's the bar. Why, Bess, thou art asleep!
Thou dreamest! Rouse thee, Bess. Go, mind the bar.
The girl's not like herself.

[*Exeunt Bess and Hostess severally.*]

Bel. A point blank shot!

An entry this in Cupid's register!

Re-enter STRAP, MALLET, and MORTICE.

Strap. There goes she. Let us follow her and speak.

Mal. Will you speak first?

Strap. Not I. Will you?

Mal. I will.

And if bold heart deserves fair hand to win,
The prize of right is mine.

Strap and Mor. We'll see!

Mal. Come on! [*Exeunt Strap and the rest after Bess.*]

Bel. Suitors! I'll warrant she has clusters of them.

Lord Wilford, was't not noon with you just now?

Wil. Noon!

Bel. Felt you not the sun?

Wil. The sun! What sun?

Bel. I'faith, a glorious one, but not so kind
As that which shines by day; for not a beam
It threw on aught beside;—you were its earth—
The grateful earth unlike—the orb alone
For which its light seem'd made—absorbing it

Without so much as e'en a smile, to show
You knew't from very darkness!

Wil. You are merry;
And I can only wonder that you are!
As sickness doth that health can feed, while she
Herself from rarest viands loathing turns.
It is not fancy: or, if fancy, 'tis—
'Tis such as breeds reality!—as from
Imagination only of disease
Disease itself will grow. Do I but dream?
Say that the anguish of a probed wound
Is but a dream! Say, he that writhes in fire,
Is fancy haunted! Just as much am I!
See'st not my fever? Is't not in mine eye?
My cheek? If not, my pulse will show it thee;
For if its throb be not the counter-one
To that which health doth owe, 'tis any thing
But index of my heart!

Re-enter STRAP, MORTICE, and MALLET.

Strap. Come, give me joy! she's mine!

Mor. Thine!

Mal. Thine! She's mine!

Strap. Nor thine, nor his she'll be. I say again
'Tis I'm to wed her.

Hos. (entering.) What's the matter, Sirs?

Strap. I'll tell thee, Mistress Trusty!

Mor. Nay, hear me!

Mal. Nay, me!

Hos. I'll listen, Sirs, to all of you.

[Retires with them up the stage.]

Wil. Whom speak they of?

Bel. The maid of maids! But one,
If truth they speak, as light as she is fair!

Hos. Ho! Bess, I say,

[Turns again to speak with Mallet, &c.]

Enter BESS, who is immediately perceived by Wilford, and meeting his eye, stands as transfixed.

Wil. Is she to be a bride?

Bel. Are you awake?

Wil. I am! I am! as one

That long at sea doth pine him sick for land;
And, ever dreaming on't, starts up at last
With the rebound which says his bark hath struck,
And drowns in sight and very reach of it.

Bel. Is that the maid?

Wil. It is. Now wonder at me.

Would'st thou not ask, sprung ever that from earth?
Look there, and think of an anatomy!
Can lurk the canker death in such a cheek?
Is not that flower imperishable as
It lodg'd the virtue of the feigned one
Which never dies; in poets' song 'yeclep'd
The immortal Amaranth!—Is she to be
A bride?

Hos. Why, Bess, how's this? Is't true thou wast
o'erheard

To one, to two, and three to give consent,
When ask'd to be a wife? Art thou not pledg'd
To marry Ralph.

Strap. Her word is pass'd to me!

Mor. To me!

Mal. To me! To morrow will decide,
When I'll be here to hand her to the church;
So, gentle Bess, good night. *[Exit Mallet.]*

Strap. To church, be sure,
She goes with me, when I to-morrow come.
Till then, sweet Bess, farewell! *[Exit Strap.]*

Mor. Feed, gentlemen,
On prospect of the feast will sure be mine.
Good night, my bride. Fair hostess, count to dress
Our wedding cheer to-morrow. [*Exit Mortice.*]

Bel. Let her go.
'Tis clear as day! She's bird of any cage!—
The cunning'st hand will catch her.

Hos. Bess, come in
And let me talk with thee. Do'st dream again?

Wil. I'll speak to her.

Bel. Thou'rt mad!

Wil. And if I am,
Then once at least is madness rational.
Being what I am, not to be mad as I,
Were to be kindred to the cloddish brute
That looks at her and knows not what it sees!—
Prevent me not!—To any one of these
Is't true thou standest pledg'd? Say yes or no.

Hos. Speak, Bess! Say yes! Thou know'st thou'rt
pledg'd to Ralph! [*Enter Ralph.*]
Maids, Sir, you know, are coy. Give me thy hand.
There—art thou now content!

[*Places her hand in Ralph's without her being
conscious of it.*]

Wil. Content!—Enough!
O'ermeasure on't! I've done.—Yet would I touch
The precious thing, so much I've coveted,
Was never till now in reach of—now so near,
Do find can ne'er be mine!—Whoe'er thou art,
Thou art acquaintance of my heart, as soon
As seen, belov'd! I saw thee only once—
That once, too oft!—for then I thought upon
My marriage bell, and wish'd it might be thine;
But now when thine they ring, they ring my knell!
'Tis not a crime to kiss thy hand while yet

The banning of the priest forbids me not.
There!—Let thy bridegroom at the altar fix,
In presence of the watching cherubim,
A truer seal upon thy lip than that
I've fixed upon thy hand; though his shall last
Till doomsday! Take me hence! 'Tis hard to look
At what we wish were ours, and while we do't,
Persuade ourselves it can't be.—Take me hence!
The only sight of her is hold too strong
For me to struggle 'gainst! It pulls me towards her!
I feel as it did suck my vision in!
My breath!—My life!—I cannot quit her!

*[Breaks from Belmont and rushes towards her.
Ralph interposes. The former seems to have lost
all power over himself. Belmont approaches him
to lead him out, but when at the wing, Wilford
turns—gazes distractedly upon Bess.]*

Lost!

*[Rushes out, followed by Belmont, and at the same
moment Bess sinks senseless on the shoulder of
Ralph.]*

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE FIRST.

THE OUTSIDE OF THE INN.

Enter WILFORD.

Wil. Love plies the rack on which itself doth lie !
Tell it of solace, and 'twill talk of pain ;
Which to augment, its piteous profit 'tis !
So far unlike love's merchant is to him
That trades for pelf. He hears his venture's sunk,
And cries, "'tis gone !" — tries to forget his loss ;
Hoists up fresh hope, and launches other freight. —
No other freight for him that trades in love !
His venture haply founder'd ! — no new hope ! —
His dreamy day of speculation's done !
His breast hath room for nothing, but the thought
How many fathom deep his hope doth lie !
He hath no use for life, except to make
Its cheek a feast for comfortless despair ;
Nor ever smiles again, except to see
How fast it wastes away ! [*Leans against a tree.*]

Enter PETER from the Inn, singing.

A white gown and girdle,
A knot of the same,
And come to our wedding,
Both damsel and dame!

Peter. A charming day!—A most pleasant day! and pleasant and charming work too—work fit for such a day! Right excellent work! Wedding and feasting! The feasting for me; the wedding for those that like it. For mine own part, holding the sex to be a provocative to wrath, which is sin, I'd sooner hang than wed! But for the feasting—there I'm your man! Roast, boiled, or fried—was never the dish that couldn't warrant me the smoothest temper'd fellow in Christendom—with the special provision that there was enough on't: I wouldn't say as much of a cup, for a cup is a thing that a man of very oil and sugar will sometimes quarrel over; but from ale to sack, I defy any man living to say he ever saw me quarrel *with* my cup—barring the liquor was bad, or the cup empty. If I'm not a man for a feast, then never man sat down to one. I could feast it you seven days out of the week, and let him that can, do more. Nay, were there eight days in the week, and the week nothing the longer, I could feast it the eighth day too. So the good cheer sha'n't lag for me. (*Sees Wilford.*) Servant, Master: which of the fair weddings have you come to see? Hers with one bridegroom, or hers with the four? (*Wilford starts up. Exit.*) A churlish mate! No matter! (*Sings.*)

Your bran new jerkins, gallants, don,
Or jerkins new, as you may;
But the gallant whose mood is not o' the best,
Were best to stay away.

I'll give them a song. Marry, that can I, when I am tuned to the pitch. I'm none of your sober singers—

your trollers of long-winded ballads, with a burden to them. I hate your burdens! To be outsung by every knave that has three notes upon his voice. I like to sing alone; but then it must be when the liquor has tuned me to the pitch. Your liquor's a marvellous fine master of singing. When I'm tuned to the pitch, I'd like you to show me the man that can sing better, or the song that's too many for me. Nay, though I know not the air, I'll put one to it. I'll sing them a song—none of your ditties—such as my old master used to grumble.

In love fair Celia fell, O,
 With alas! and O! and a well-a-day!
 And her love the maid would tell, O,—
 Love comes and goes like sun in May!

Above your reach ten feet, O,
 With alas! and O! and a well-a-day!
 A pear's ten times as sweet, O,—
 Love comes and goes like sun in May!

The youth he loved the maid, O,
 With alas! and O! and a well-a-day!
 But to woo her was afraid, O,—
 Love comes and goes like sun in May!

But when her love she told, O,
 With alas! and O! and a well-a-day!
 His love grew wondrous cold, O,—
 Love comes and goes like sun in May!

My moral would you find, O,
 With alas! and O! and a well-a-day!
 No maid should tell her mind, O,—
 Love comes and goes like sun in May!

Enter OLD SMALL, as off a Journey.

O. Small. I thank thee, fortune! Kind art thou to me!
 He's here! He's here!—Why, who should sing that
 strain,

If not the varlet-knave he took with him?
That can't be he!

Peter. My master's father here!

O. Small. Good Sir,—

Peter. (*Aside.*) All's right. He knows me not.

O. Small. I pray
Heard you a strain just now?

Peter. I know not what you call a strain. I heard a varlet trying to play a tune upon his nose, which I could have pulled for him,—'twas so villanously ill done. If you call that a strain, let never man sing a strain to me! I know when I hear a strain. In your strain there is measure of time, which is the main part of it; measure of tune, which is no indifferent part of it; and measure of voice, which, though it rank not with either of the former, is yet allowed to be a part: but here was neither measure of time, tune, nor voice, but measure enough of the lack of them. If playing a tune upon the nose be a strain, why then I heard a strain just now; but whip me if I'd stand to hear such strain again.

O. Small. This never could be he.

Peter. He eyes me hard.

O. Small. One question more, good Sir. What kind of man was he you heard sing?

Peter. What! your nose-tuner? Why, a tolerably sufficient man—nay, a very sufficient man; say he had the dress of one.

O. Small. How was he dressed, I pray you?

Peter. Marry, with cap, jerkin, hose, and shoes; but the cap was out at the crown, the jerkin was out at the elbows, the hose were out all over, and as for the shoes, it would tax a conjuror to find out why he wore them, for the uppers were the most that remained of them, and they were out at the toes. Shirt had he none, or

he showed it not; doublet, had he ever, his jerkin must have eaten up, for it was a most incontinent one—a devourer of all kinds of cloth!—coarse, middle, fine, and superfine; and of all colours—a superlative sample of patch-work—a very nosegay of a jerkin, saving the odour on't. If he was a gentleman, he was a gentleman in jest; if he was a beggar, he was a beggar in earnest. Service he could never have had; for bowels of flesh and blood could not have committed it—to put a human body into such rat's livery.

O. Small. My scarecrow Peter, to a certainty.

Enter YOUNG SMALL from the Inn.

Peter. My master! In, Sir! in!

Y. Small. Why, what's the matter!

O. Small. (*To Peter.*) Worthy Sir,—

Peter. Anon.

Y. Small. My father!

Peter. Fear not,—knows he not 'tis I.

Y. Small. Nay, if he finds us out, my fortune's marr'd.

Peter. Stay! and I'll rid you of him in a trice.

O. Small. Pray you, what gentleman is that?

Peter. Gentleman! Ne'er saw you lord before?

O. Small. Is he a lord?

Peter. Is he a lord!—Look at him!—Is he not a lord! Not your lord mayor, forsooth—a lord, to-day; and master, to-morrow; but an every day-lord—a lord and no thanks to you: nay, and he halt at the third hob-nail, yet shall he be a lord. Avoid him, or carry your cap in your hand. He takes measure of state upon him. If you take the wall of him, you may chance to take from the wall to the stocks. It happened no later than yesterday; though, truth to say, the youth was a forward one—one of your care-noughts

from the city—a fellow that would Hector it like a prince—though six days out of the seven, I warrant you, his father wipes his beard with an apron.

O. Small. What! Put he him in the stocks?

Peter. Ay did he; and from the stocks into prison, whence if he be not transferred to the gallows, he has more luck than grace.

O. Small. How angered he the lord, I pray you?

Peter. Marry, as I said, he took the wall of him; whereat the lord commended the wall to his head, which he not relishing, commended his hand to the lord's cheek, who thereupon commended his body to the stocks, and thence to the prison; whence when he is delivered, 'twill be upon a release in full, signed by the sheriff, and executed by the hangman,—for he is a great lord.

O. Small. Alack! so it should seem, Sir!—Know you, Sir, the name of the youth?

Peter. I heard it, but have forgotten it, and yet have I a memory; but 'twas a very patch of a name. One good substantial name would make three such. 'Twas something like Sprat—or—

O. Small. 'Twasn't Small?

Peter. Small was the name!

O. Small. Alack, Sir, 'tis my son!

Peter. Thy son!—Avoid!—Avoid! Safety for thee lies hence—here, danger! Shares he thy blood, and shalt thou not share his punishment? Would he have transgressed but for thee, who but for thee had never lived to transgress? Shall he on whom treason is fathered hang, and the father of the traitor go free?—Avoid, I say!—Begone!—Fine awaits thee! Imprisonment awaits thee! A cord awaits thee!—

O. Small. Might I but have speech
Of that fair lord? Good Sir, hast thou his ear?

Look, here are twenty pieces,—speak for me,
And call them thine !

Peter. 'Twould naught avail !

O. Small. Good Sir,

I'll make the twenty thirty !—Take them, Sir !—
Good thirty pieces only for a word !
Come, then, I'll make the thirty forty !—What !
Won't that suffice ? What will, then ?—Sir, you see
A poor old man that has an only son,
Whom he, in evil hour, let go from him,
Thinking that he could live without him, till
The task he tried, but found too hard a one !
Then choice had none except to follow him,
Or stay at home and die ! And here is come,
To Rumford all the way from London, Sir,—
On foot, Sir !—Take the forty pieces, Sir !—
Nay, then, take fifty !—sixty !—all I have !
And only speak a good word for my son.

Y. Small. Peter, thou'st spoiled it all !—Ne'er heed !
ne'er heed !

Thy son is not to hang. (*Speaking with his back towards
Old Small.*)

O. Small. O thanks for that !

But he's in prison. Ope the door for him,
Although to close't on me ! I'll take his place :
Perhaps of right I should. I held the lash
And rein—if he's refractory or rash,
Why is he so, but that I used them not !
He better were had he been better trained !
That he's not so, his training bear the blame.
That lies with me. Yet was my fault my love !
My too fond love !—so fond ! it could not see
How duty could be harsh and yet be kind !

Y. Small. Father !

O. Small. How!—What!—My son!—Ah, Thomas,
Thomas!

To pass thee on thy father for a lord! [To Peter.
And who is this?—Thou varlet—knave—rank knave!

Y. Small. Nay, father, well 'twas meant;—thou
comest here

To see great things.

O. Small. Is this a sample of them?
What kind of jerkin's that for thee to wear?
'Twould suit a lord! And trunks to match withal,
And doublet! Board and lodging for a life
Thou carry'st on thy back!—A cap and plume!
Why, for what cobwebs, Thomas, hast thou chang'd
Thy father's heavy crowns! What's that I see?
Wear'st thou a rapier too! The end of time
Is come!—And thou, thou ape—for nothing good,
But tricks!—Thou mischief! Evil ne'er at rest!—
For whom the hide were clothing good enough—
Are these my savings that do shine on thee?
The which to keep, thy master's back more oft
Did lack than go provided! Cap and plume
For thee!—A halter for thee!—Sirrah!—I'll to town
Again.—No hope! No help! Discomfort all!
Care lost! Love wasted! Thomas, fare-thee-well!
I shake thy hand in bitterness, I do!
I'll strive to live without thee!—To what use?
I tried, and couldn't do't! [Falls on his neck.

Y. Small. Take not on so!
Or I'll take on. In sooth I will!—I'm not
A stone—a lump of flint—a piece of steel.
Let our apparel pass—or note it but
For joy—for very joy! Thou hast a son
That's born to fortune!—to high fortune! Know
To-day's my wedding day!

O. Small. Thy wedding day!

Y. Small. My wedding day.

O. Small. And who's to be thy bride?

Y. Small. A lady.

O. Small. How! Why, wherewithal hast thou
To keep a lady?

Y. Small. Keep a lady!—No;
Sufficient 'tis, methinks, I marry her.

My lady shall keep me. How say you now?

My lady's blood! She's one that comes of kin—
That looks for lands and coffers—that is heir
To titles! Wonder not though thou should'st have
A baron to thy grandson! Close accounts,
And shut up shop!

O. Small. I'm all amaze!—I'd like
To see thy bride.

Y. Small. Thou shalt; but not in trim
Like that. Her lackey does not wait in such!
Thou must be new attired.—Silks, velvets, cloths
Of gold and silver she regards, as stuffs
Your low mechanic's wife!—In, father, in!
We'll find thee change of suit for our chang'd state,
Then shalt thou see my bride,—Look to him, Peter,
Let him not forth until the knot be tied,
And I be fast and sure a gentleman.

[*Exeunt Peter and Old Small into the Inn.*]

Hoa, Kate! Sweet Kate!

Kate. (*coming to the door.*) Who calls?

Y. Small. Your bridegroom, Kate.
To church! To church!

Kate. Before my bridesmaid comes!

Y. Small. Thy bridesmaid, Kate, is not to marry thee,
But I; and I am here; so loiter not:
The sexton's part is done, the doors are op'd;
The clerk is ready with his horn and pen;
The parson's gown'd, and standing by the book;

The merry bells are on the watch to ring—
There want but thee and me; so come to church!

Kate. Without a bridesmaid, I should be asham'd.

Y. Small. How delicate! Your bridesmaid yonder
So come, my lady Kate! [comes;

Kate. Heigho!

Y. Small. How sweet!

Lean on me, Kate.

Kate. I fear to take thy arm.

Y. Small. How elegant! Nay, Kate—

Kate. But if I must—

Y. Small. How like a lady doth she carry her
In all things! Bear up, Kate! Take courage, Kate!
Come on! Now warrant me a gentleman! [*Exeunt.*

Music without.—Enter WILFORD and BELMONT.

Wil. They come to carry her to church! To own
The happy hand she'll take to lead her there,
Would I forego the clasp of fortune's own,
And all her gifts of rank and wealth refund!

Bel. Yet gave she these in kindness. By their means
Your love might prosper yet. What need you do,
But doff this sordid guise, appear yourself,
And ask, and have her?

Wil. No! not even her
For their deserts!—Myself! What's of myself
That is not here? Call I the prouder suit
I should put on—myself? Call I my name,
No merit ever won of mine—myself?
They're naught of me but what a knave might wear
As well as I! My ardent soul's myself!—
My heart, too proud to be in fortune's debt,
Where merit sole should win—myself! My mind,
That its chief store by nature's riches sets
With this its vassal case, such as it is—

Myself—the only self I'd use or thank
To win me love or friend ! So end my part
What it began ! I'll look once more upon her !

[Retires with Belmont.]

Music.—Enter MALLEY and party with a fiddle, STRAP and party with a fife, and MORTICE and party with a drum.—Enter HOSTESS from the Inn.

Hos. What mumming's this ?

Mal. I come to fetch my bride,
With friends and kin to carry her to church :
So, gentle hostess, say I wait for her.

Strap. Kind hostess, love you profitable work,
That office rather will you do for me ;
For come who may to carry her to church,
'Tis I'm the man she looks for.

Mor. Hostess fair,
That profitable work you love I know ;
If such you'd find, you'll be my messenger,
And hand me forth the bride whom this blithe morn
Shall see me make a wife.

Hos. I trust, good Sirs,
You've brides a-piece ! The name of yours, Sir ?

Mal. Bess.

Hos. And yours, Sir ?

Strap. Bess.

Hos. And yours, Sir ?

Mor. Bess.

Hos. Your brides,
I'd counsel you, good Sirs, to seek elsewhere ;
We've Besses none but one. She's woo'd and won,
And here the bridegroom comes that she's to wed.

Enter RALPH.

Ralph, where's thy bride ?

Ralph. She's in her chamber still.

Hos. Then bring her forth.

Ralph. She doth refuse to come.

Mal. She'll come for me.

Strap. For me be sure she will.

Mor. Ay will she, Sirs, for one of you, if more
Than once I call before she comes for me.

Hos. Hold, Sirs! She'll come for none of you. For
what

Delays she thus? Her bonnet's trimm'd—her coif
She has—I sent her in her wedding gown
An hour ago. I'm certain 'twas a fit!
I'll fetch her forth myself.—Is that her step?

It is. She comes. (*Enter Bess, dressed as the Beggar's
Daughter.*) Why, Bess, are you not dress'd?
In trim like that went ever bride to church?

Mor. Trim good enough for me! To church, my
bride.

Bess. No bride of thine am I.

Mal. I told you so!

Come, Bess! Why tarry we? To church! To church!

Bess. Nor bride of thine!

Mal. No!

Strap. Yield the palm to me!

Say I a thing and know not what I say?

Come, pretty Bess! your hand to go to church!

Bess. Nor go I, Sir, a bride, to church with you.

Ralph. Well answer'd, Bess! What say you to me
now?

Eh, Sirs? Am I the lucky man or not?

Who'd wish the bridegroom joy, doff cap to me!

Fair morning, Sirs! Right welcome, one and all!

Most neighbourly and kind it is of you

To do such honour to my wedding day.

I'd not be thought to brag, Sirs, yet, in sooth,

Maid does not live can boast she's said me nay;
 But let that pass. Enough I prosper now;
 As all may see. So let's to church; and he
 That's first of my fair bride to give me joy,
 I'faith shall hand her there. How say you, Bess?

Bess. Who hands thy bride to church, there hands
 not me.

Wil. (Aside.) Hope! hearty friend! Art thou come
 back to me?

I feel thee, yet can scarce believe I do,
 So sure I thought we had for ever parted.

O welcome—welcome!

Hos. Gav'st thou not consent
 To marry Ralph?

Mal. Said'st thou not ay to me?

Strap. To me?

Mor. To me?

Bess. Consent I could not give,
 Ay if I said to you, or you, or you,
 My heart was never author of the deed—
 My tongue did act without its privacy.
 The hand you covet, others' wishes claim
 Disposal of.—I have parents.

Ralph. Where are they?

Bess. Alas! I know not; but I go to seek them.

Ralph. I'll go along with thee!

Mal. And I!

Strap. And I!

Mor. And I! Who are thy parents, pretty Bess?

Ralph. Tell us, sweet Bess!

Mal. Sweet Bess, thy father's name?

Strap. What is thy father?

Bess. The blind beggar, Sir,
 Of Bethnal Green.

Strap. Was I about to wed

A beggar's daughter! Any thing but that!
Your claims decide, Sirs, as you please; no stop
They'll find in me.

Mal. Sweet Bess, thou'rt fair enough
To be the daughter of a crowned king;
But not to make a wandering beggar man
Befitting sire for me.

Mor. I love thee, Bess,
In sooth I do; but thy estate's too low
With mine to couple, e'en for love of thee,
So, pretty Bess, whoe'er would wed thee may.

Ralph. Sweet Bess, had'st thou for father craftsman
low

As low can be, I should be well content
To call him father too; a beggar, though,
No father is for me.

Hos. I swear there's not
A man among you! Would that I were one,
And worth thee, Bess; as I'm a woman true,
I'd trounce them all and shame them, that I would;
And marry thee outright! Fie on you, Sirs!
I wot you're no true men! Fie on thee, Ralph,
Thou'rt son of mine no more. If thou'rt too proud
To call her wife, too proud I'd have thee be
To call me mother; for, without thy aid,
She's henceforth child to me. Hold up thy head,
My pretty Bess! Thou'rt bride too good for them!
Above their mark! Shame on them! Shame! I would
I knew the man were worth thee, Bess.

Wil. What kind
Of man were he!

Hos. Why, likely such as thou,
For looks!—though I've seen better. Met we not
Before?—A mercy!—Yesternight we did,
When thou didst rave of knells, and wedding bells,

For love of Bess! Art now in raving mood?
Or have thy wits, last night, a roaming went,
Return'd with this fair morning? Come, confess,
Thou'rt brother of the rest?

Wil. Of none, good dame,
Who slight that maid!

Hos. What! would'st thou take the maid?

Wil. Not take her, dame!—

Hos. I knew't,—

Wil. You're over quick;

You stop my speech, nor know the way 'twould run!

Hos. 'Twould run?—It runs, I wot, no other way
Than that of half thy sex, when they find out
A woman's dower's herself.

Wil. You wrong me, dame!

Hos. Why, said you not you would not take the maid?

Wil. I grant I did; but,—

Hos. But? Give me no buts!

Say downright no at once!—"But this—but that;
You love us—but! You'd wed us—but!"—As much
You love as you would wed! You'd wed, besure,
If sure you lov'd! Yet you *do* love, you say,
But cannot wed,—and love indeed you do,
But—in your own coin, to be quits with you—
You love us not for ourselves!

Wil. I'faith, not so!

And to convince you that your thought doth hold
The countercourse to that which mine doth steer,
I'll say I'd take the maid, but,—

Hos. There!

Wil. Nay, peace!

Thwart not my soul, of which to judge the love,
Thou must partaker of its essence be.

Take her!—Take fortune, honours, fame! They're
things

We hunt for;—they're the eager chase, that so
 Inspires us, despite its length, its stops,
 Its perils, its escapes and accidents,
 We keep it up with cheer! and what are these
 To this excelling maid?—I would not take—
 For that were to suppose a thing obtain'd,
 Untoild, and unadventur'd for—I'd win her!

Hos. And worthy were to win! I vow thou'rt
 grown

An e'en right handsome man! How say you, Bess?
 Wilt thou to church be led by him? Nor no,
 Nor yes? I marvel what a maid would say,
 Who, when she's ask'd to church, doth hang her head!
 Is't no?—No, Bess?—An angel to a crown
 'Tis no! but no to no, that answers no.
 Sweet Bess, had'st e'er thy fortune read to thee?
 Show me thy hand. How white a thing it is!
 What's here? Here's line, and line, and ne'er a cross—
 A lucky hand! Look! Saw you e'er the like?
 Methinks this hand betoken should a maid
 Not like to wed—for wedlock's still, you know,
 The cross of womankind. She'll never wed!
 You think she will, I see, and doubt my skill!—
 Then try your own, and read the hand yourself.

Wil. This precious hand, had I the skill to read,
 Great as the will, and fortune it foretold,
 Past what could e'er be mine; I'd wish it well!
 Though what its hope did build, of mine were wreck!
 If adverse was its promise.—Lucklessness
 Through life, unpurchas'd foes, unstable friends,
 Afflictions, beggary, in all—but love—
 And I the one to keep thee rich in that,—
 'Fore hands with fortune's pledges fair, o'er-writ,
 I'd covet thine! and for that only gift,
 Compound for all beside! Did'st press my hand?

Thou did'st !—Thou did'st !—Deny it not, while stands
That glowing witness on thy modest cheek,
To back my tongue? I faith, love's day doth come,
And that's the dawn, or never yet did beam
His golden sun on earth ! And I to be
Its harbinger to her ! Come, let us seek
Thy parents. Rich enough are they for me,
Whose blessing leaves me not a wish to bless !

Ralph. He shall not take her hence !

Mal. Don't let him do't !

Ralph. Will you stand by me ?

Strap. One and all, we will !

Wil. Kind hostess, fare you well ! We part to meet !

Ralph. Hold, Sir !

Wil. How now ?

Ralph. No Bess you carry hence !

Wil. She goes of her free will !

Ralph. But not with you !

Wil. Why, who shall hinder her ?

Hos. Ay, answer that !

Who knows a woman how to love, besure
Knows how to keep her too !

Wil. I take her hence.—

Lay hand on her who dares !

Ralph and the others. Down with him !

Enter HERALD and Officers.

Herald. Hold !

We bear the Queen's commands. Your broils suspend,
And to her gracious will lend duteous ear,
Which summon doth her subjects, far and near,
To render to our custody, a maid ;
'Tis said, in beauty rich, as poor in state—
A beggar's daughter, once of Bethnal Green.

Ralph. There stands she, Sirs !

Herald. Then ends our tedious search.

'Tis she indeed, for who can match with her !

Come, maiden fair.

Wil. She's mine ! She shall not go !

Herald. When says the Queen she shall, shalt thou
say no ?

She thine ! Her mate thou might'st not serve on knee !
For him we come to take her. Thwart us not,
Hind as thou art, base born, as well as bred,
Which plain thy looks bespeak !

Wil. Belie they then

Their master ; who, whate'er his birth, can boast
Breeding more high than at command of thee,
However back'd, to tamely yield his right,
In this fair maid ! Talk you of other mate ?
He does not live, or, if he does, shall not !

Herald. You talk it mightily.

Wil. I'll do it too.

Look you,—a man will let one take his life
Ere he'll give up his purse ; and that, perhaps,
Will hold a score of crowns. It hath been done
For less. Come, state the sum thou'dst set 'gainst her !
What's its amount ? Come, name't. Could'st borrow it
From usury ? Could'st find it in the mint ?
In that which feeds the mint—the unwasting mine ?
Could'st eke it out with diamonds, and the rest
Of all the brood of gems ! Could'st fancy it ?
And shall I give her up that have the right
To keep her ? Never but with life ! She's mine !
You see she is ! You see her will no less
Doth hold her here, than do the arms, with all
My soul I lock upon her. Loosen them
Who counts his life a straw !

Hos. A spark ! A spark

Among a score !—I'd counsel you to take

His word, good Sir. He's one that says and does !
 The man for me, were I the maid, I'd have
 In spite of you !

[*Herald consults with Officers.*]

Ralph. (*to Mallet, &c.*) They question what to do !
 In lucky time have they put on our shoes ;
 In which to stand they find no easy thing.
 He's thorough wildfire ! Deal with him who may
 For me !

Herald. Enforcement were as easy as
 Forbearance. That thy looks belie thy state,
 Thy words not weakly vouch. If that is such,
 As these would warrant, what in duty sole
 We'd do, thou'lt suffer to be done. The Queen,
 Returning from her progress to the city
 Of loyal Norwich, passes presently
 Through Rumford. Bring thyself the maid before her,
 Under our conduct. Her behest obeyed,
 We stint not for the way.

Wil. Content !—Lead on !
 Come, Bess, my bride ! Before the Queen herself,
 I'll claim thee !—Ay ! in teeth of any he—
 No matter though the proudest in the land !

[*Exeunt Wilford, Bess, Herald, &c.*]

Hos. And I'll stand by thee, sure as I'm the Queen
 Of the "Queen's Arms !" [Exit Hostess.]

Ralph. What shall we do for spite ?

Mal. I'll hang myself !

Mor. Drowning's an easier death !

Strap. Shooting's genteeler far !

Ralph. What say you, Stitch ?

Stitch. I think there's comfort in a cup of ale
 Most marvellous !

Ralph. And right you think ! Come, friends,

Let care go hang! Walk in with me—I've news:
Our Kate, to-day, doth wed a gentleman.

All. A gentleman!

Ralph. I'll tell thee o'er the cup,
Which when we've ta'en, we'll see them back from
church.

There's sport on foot, I promise you!—Your parts
You've all to act,—the which if well you play,
Our gentleman shall mind his wedding-day!

[*Exeunt.*

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE FIRST.

THE FRONT OF THE QUEEN'S ARMS.

Enter PETER.

Peter. A sight! a sight—a sight! O la! ha! ha! ha!—Your bear and monkey-show is nothing to it. Becomes the bear to dance, and the monkey to dress like a christian; better than my old master, to case him in my young master's habiliments!—O la! Ha! ha! ha!—From the hose to the cap, not an item but enters its protest, as my master's lawyer would say, against the use 'tis put to. Ha! ha! ha!—O la! The cap will not cover the crown; the cloak will not sit upon the shoulders; the jerkin's of the mind of the cloak; the doublet's o'ermeasure for the breast, and scant measure for the waist; and as for the hose, they are out of all measure!—O la! I have laugh'd to very crying, and yet 'twont do. Nothing will take the humour out of me! I have scarce dried my eyes when I am as ready to laugh as before—O la!—Ha! ha! ha!—Here he comes! I must keep it in, and yet cannot I, though I should die for't—O la!—Ha! ha! ha!—Would any one but give me a

tweak of the nose now, or spit in my face to anger me!—
 I'll think as though 'twere done, and stamp and talk big.
 —A knave! A swaggerer! A cheat! A cut-purse!—One
 every honest man should turn his back upon. (*turning sees*
Old Small who has just entered) O la! Ha! ha! ha!—
 Ha! ha! ha! ha!—ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!—I have nothing
 I see, but the heels for it. (*Peter runs off.*)

O. Small. He laughs at me.—He may; he has a right—
 His folly's my reproof; which, were he wise,
 His frown instead would give. To please my Son
 Have I put on this suit, and mock'd myself.
 Well, well! If wisdom totters in old age,
 Forgive it for its knees that totter too;
 I will be blithe on my son's wedding day;
 Say but to pleasure him. If well he weds—
 Why well! Howe'er he weds, 'tis change of state
 That may bring change of use. (*music*) I'st he that comes?
 It is. I'll stand aloof lest I should shame him. (*retires*)

[*Enter YOUNG SMALL and KATE, preceded by a drum and*
fife, and followed by bridesmaids and bridesmen, RALPH,
MORTICE, MALLET, STRAP and STITCH.

RALPH to MORTICE and the others.

Now play your parts as I've directed you,
 Is this not Master Stitch, the tailor's son?
 Good Master Stitch, you're welcome.—Hark, a word.

Y. Small. (*to Ralph and party*) I thank you friends for
 your fair company,

'Twas kindly done to wait on us at church,
 And give us convoy back.

Strap. In sooth, good Sir,
 We serv'd but for a fee which still we lack,

But now with leave will take. We mean a kiss
Of your fair bride.

Y. Small. My bride take kiss of thee !
My bride's a lady.

Strap. E'en of lady may
An honest craftsman freely crave a kiss
Upon her wedding day.

Y. Small. What craft is thine ?
An honest cobbler at your service, Sir.

Y. Small. A cobbler kiss my bride!—A cobbler's not
A craft !—Not half a craft. I question if
The third of one.—A cordiner's a craft.
What he doth make the cobbler's only mends,
And so's no better than a patch!—a botch,
A nail, a tack, a stitch—A cobbler !—So !
How men forget themselves ! An awl—a piece
Of wax, a thread, the bristle of a hog,
And there's a cobbler!—No, not for a pound,
I'd have it said of me, a cobbler e'er
Gave kiss to bride of mine!—Couldst bear it, Kate ?
No, never gentlewoman could !

Stitch. In truth
He much presumes ; and rightly do you say
No craft hath he, if means a craft a trade—
Cobbling's no trade.

Strap. And what if none it be ?
'Tis part of every trade, for every trade
Hath cobblers ; ay and every calling too.
Your law hath cobblers ; your divinity,
Your surgery, your physic ; there are cobblers
In merchandise and war. Who does not know
What cobblers are there 'mongst your politicians !
If that should be a craft which is well follow'd,
Then cobbling is a craft—Ay, chief of crafts !

Y. Small. Well hast thou argued it; yet prov'st thou
not

Thy right to kiss my bride.

Stitch. Most true and so

Take I his place, Sir.

Y. Small. Not so fast—Thy craft?

Stitch. So please you, Sir, a tailor.

Y. Small. What?

Stitch. A tailor.

Y. Small. A tailor kiss my bride! Why worse and
worse!

Look you good master thread—

Stitch. My name is Stitch, Sir.

Small. A better name! A thread's a whole, whereas
A stitch is but a portion of a thread,
As thou'rt the portion only of a man.

Look you good master Stitch—A lady is
My bride; but were she lady ten times o'er,
And stoop'd to kiss from thee—I would not give
A thimble for her.

Stitch. Look you, master Small—
For so they write thee in the vestry book—
Who'd lady kiss, lips he thy gentle bride,
Gets not his wish. A lady she forsooth—
She's lady Bess, that was the chambermaid.

Y. Small. That was a lady when a chambermaid.

Stitch. A crown on that.

Y. Small. I would not take thy coin.

Stitch. Thou wouldst not lose thine own—Say rather
that.

Y. Small. Mind I my coin that am a gentleman?
Mind I my coin?—Look you, Sir Snip-away!
Mindst thou those parings of thy thrifty trade,
Thou leav'st the brush? As much mind I my coin.

Stitch. Then bet the crown.

Y. Small. A crown?—a penny piece!
 A halfpenny! a farthing!—Quarter that,
 So weighs a crown with me. A crown forsooth!
 Fear I to lose a crown? A man of lands,
 Coffers, revenues!—Who, his income counts
 By hundreds—hundreds!

Stitch. Will you bet a crown?

Y. Small. A crown?—A score of crowns!

Stitch. I bet but one,
 And that because I've said it—which was rash,
 So much to stake upon a chamber-maid.

Y. Small. Thou slip! thou strip! thou selvage! paring
 thou!

Com'st from the board whereon thou sitt'st asquat,
 With thread on neck, thimble on finger, shears,
 Needle, or goose in hand; and ply'st the trade
 Has par'd thee down, till thou'rt diminish'd to
 The ninth part of a man!—What! com'st thou thence,
 With tongue expert at nought but the deserts
 Of cutting, clipping, trimming, stitching, basting,
 And cabbaging, to rail at my fair bride?
 To thy one crown, I'll bet a score of crowns!

Ralph. (coming forward.) Hold Sir! would'st ruin thee?

Y. Small. Was e'er the like?

Mind I a score of crowns?—Peace, prithee, peace!
 A score of crowns to me!—Two score to one!

Ralph. Two score! Ne'er heed him Sir; he wagers
 not.

Y. Small. I do! I wager two score crowns to one!
 One crown!—and there's the money down for him.

[*puts the money into Mortice's hand.*]

Ralph. (to the others.) Well goes it on!—He has wager'd
 all he has.

Y. Small. Thy kin, my Kate?—Thy kin, my lady Kate?

Kate. (looking alternately at Small and Ralph.) Anan?

Y. Small. Anan !—Thy kin ?

Kate. Anan ?

Y. Small. Thy kin ?

Thy family ?—Thy house ?—Thy pedigree ?

Thy ancestry ?

Kate. Anan ?

Y. Small. Anan again !

Whence drawest thou thy noble blood, my Kate ?

How comes it to thee ? Is it by the male

Or female side ? The lands thou'rt heiress to—

The titles that shall fall to thee—in right

Of whom expect'st thou them ? Thy father, or

Thy mother, my fair Kate ? Thy mother was

The child—

Kate. Of Simon Welt of Cripplegate.

Y. Small. Sir Simon was he not ?

Strap. Plain Simon, Sir.

An honest cobbler, Sir, in right of whom

Kiss I your lady bride, for speaks she true ;

We're cousins, Sir !

Stitch. The wager's mine.

Y. Small. Not yet.

The mother's only one side of the house ;

The other's to be told. Ne'er heed, my Kate ;

What if thy mother was of low degree ?

Thou art a lady yet, and prove it, Kate !—

Thy mother made a match—

Strap. She did indeed !

Y. Small. A noble match, I warrant me !

Strap. A match

None look'd to see her make.

Y. Small. I knew 'twas so.

Give me thy hand ! I do acknowledge thee.

Beshrew me, but you're marvellous alike !

You must be cousins in the first degree !

Whom match'd thy cousin's mother with, so high,
So rich, that none e'er look'd to see't.—His name?
Or, if thou please, his title?—What was he?

Strap. A tailor.

Y. Small. What!

Strap. A tailor.

Y. Small. I suppose

A master tailor?

Strap. No, a journeyman.

Y. Small. A journeyman!

Strap. His name was Cape.

Stitch. Tom Cape!

My father's gossip. Many a year they met
At the same house of call. The wager's mine!
I take your crowns, Sir, without ringing them,
And of your fair bride freely wish you joy.

Y. Small. Art thou not any way a lady, Kate?

Kate. Yes, one way am I so.

Y. Small. Which way is that?

Kate. I'm married to a gentleman, you know.

Ralph. I give you joy of your fair husband, Kate!

Mor. Joy to you, Kate!

Mal. Joy to you, pretty Kate!

Strap. Joy to you, cousin Kate! since high you've match'd
I'm not asham'd to call you so, altho'
You've been a chamber-maid. What glee 'twill spread
Thro' all the house, when they do here on't, Kate!
Thy brother will be proud as new-made lord—
Thy sister think she's lady well as thou—
Thy father on his lap-stone will beat tune,
To which, I'll swear, thy mother's sure to sing
For joy that Kate hath wed a gentleman!

Ralph. So fine a gentleman!

Mal. I dare be bound,
His income's good a hundred pounds a year.

Mor. A hundred?—Say a thousand !

Strap. Double that !

Stitch. You'd fall far short on't, Sir ! Two thousand pounds?

Two thousand shillings ! Think upon the cost
Of keeping up his state!—His town-house, Sirs,
And country-house !

Mor. His handsome carriages !

Mal. His horses, Sirs, for draught and riding too !

Strap. His butler, huntsman, coachman, footmen, grooms !

Stitch. His house-maids, chamber-maids, and kitchen-maids !

Ralph. And lady's maid, to wait upon his wife !
Two thousand pounds a year for him ! Had I
A week of his revenue every year,
I'd be an easy man !—Mark, gentlemen,
His heavy charges since he has been here.

Stitch. Eleven-pence and one halfpenny per day !

Mor. He'd need to be a lord to live at that !

Mal. A lord?—A prince !

Strap. You're right. It needs must be
A royal fortune that could hold it out.

Must it not, cousin Kate ?

Ralph. Your bill, good Sir,
Which humbly do I pray you to discharge.

Y. Small. Anon !—Anon !

Ralph. Some outlay for the house,
In honour of your wedding cheer we'd make,
So please you pay it now.

Y. Small. Anon, I say !

Ralph. Anon's not now, good Sir, we want it now.

Strap. Why Kate, I judge thou hast a cousin more
Than thou had'st yesterday, for I'll be hang'd
If thou'rt not cozen'd by thy husband, Kate !
I fear your gentleman's no gentleman !

Ralph. What say you? I begin to fear so too.
If gentleman thou art, prove thou art so.

Where's thy estate?

Mor. What shire is't in?

Mal. Its name?

Stitch. What's the domain it borders with? I wot
House stands not on't. I'll forfeit all thy crowns,
If all the while thou hast not play'd the cheat!

Kate. Art not a gentleman?

Y. Small. As much as thou'rt
A lady, Kate!

Stitch. I knew't.

Strap. To jail with him!

Mor. No, set him in the stocks!

Mal. No, give him drink
Of the cold pump!

Y. Small. Nay, an you're for that game,
We'll play it masters! (*putting himself on his defence.*)

Kate. Gentleman or not,
The man's a man!—he's now my husband, Sirs,
And touch him if you dare!

O. Small. (*coming forward.*) Well said, my girl!—
And let me see the man lays hand upon
The son of Gilbert Small, the pin maker!

Ralph. A pin maker! I give you joy, sweet Kate,
Thy gentleman hath dwindled to a pin!

O. Small. And if he has, 'tis to a golden one!
Wilt be a husband, Thomas, to thy bride?

Y. Small. Ay will I; will she be to me a wife?

Kate. With all her heart!

O. Small. Your hands upon it then. (*joins their hands.*)
Thomas, I hope to see thee yet a man;
A good wife's half the making, son, of one,
And after all's the best of fortunes, Thomas.

Now for your charges, Sir, and let's shake hands.
Whate'er has pass'd, we'll take it in good part;
We'll have no frowns on my son's wedding day!

Enter PETER.

Peter. Patches! Patches! Patches!—You that have whole gowns, patch them, maids; You that have patched ones, change them not for new. Patches are all the fashion! Give your silks for serges; your ribbons for worsted tape strings. You that would wed highly, swear that you were born lowly. Better you come from a dunghill side, than a gentlewoman's bed-chamber! Fathers who would put off their daughters and put on nobility, let them become stone-blind, and follow a dog and bell! Such news for you!—Never was rarer! Your pretty bar-maid, you know, that had turned all your wits for you, until she turned herself into a beggar's daughter, is about to be turned into a great lady.

All. How? how? how?

Peter. How think you now? Why, by marrying a great lord!

Ralph. And who's to manage that for her?

Peter. Why, who but the Queen, who can turn anything into anything else she likes. Here she's come with her whole court, within a cock's stride of Rumford, and has set her down at some great nobleman's, I know not whose; and there have they spread a pavilion for her, where all are welcome to come and look at her; and there, as the rumour runs, she's about to marry the beggar's daughter of Bethnal Green to a great lord!

Ralph. May any one come?

Peter. Said I not so? but you must keep at due distance.

Y. Small. Wilt see the sight, my Kate?

Kate. You will, I know—
You would have married Bess.

Y. Small. That's one escape!
Father, I might have ta'en a beggar's maid,
Had I not lit on Kate. A lord may wed
A beggar's daughter, I'm for no such bride.
Come, Kate! come, father! Friends! for friends we're now,
Let's go and see the sight.

Peter. I'll bring you to't—Had I but time, I'd doff my
new clothes—Patches are all the fashion. No knowing
what might come on't—I might be turned into a great lord
by't.

Ralph. How, prithee?

Peter. How think you now?—Why, by marrying a great
lady.—Come along—come along.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE THE LAST.

A SPLENDID PAVILION.

IN THE CENTRE, AN ELEVATED AND COSTLY SEAT.

Enter Two LORDS.

1st Lord. I' faith my lord, 'tis true. The beggar's gold
Did beat the noble's. Angels dropp'd he still,

When cried the other hold, until the ground
That bore his heap, with good three thousand shone.

2d Lord. So weds the lord his son the beggar's maid.

1st Lord. The Queen decrees it so; and even here,
Before the priest, he takes her by the hand.

2d Lord. How learn'd the Queen 'twas he that fore'd
The beggar's maid? [away

1st Lord. His ring, that from his hand
Came as he struggled with her father, was
The witness 'gainst him. Hark, my Lord! they come.

[*Music. Enter a body of Archers, Gentlemen, Knights,
and Barons, LORD WILLOUGHBY, LORD THOMAS,
LORD WOODVILLE, the Queen's Chaplain, Herald's, and
Archers. The QUEEN, her train borne by pages.
Train of Ladies, closed by Archers. The SMALLS, &c.
WILFORD, BELMONT, and HOSTESS. The QUEEN
sits.*

Bel. Contain thyself! her hand she'll never give.

Wil. Does she? She may!—Refuses she, let him
That dares, attempt to take it!

Hos. Hold to that.

I would, were I a man!

Bel. Thou tremblest.

Wil. Yes.

And so wouldst thou, hadst thou upon the east
That's now to throw, but stak'd the twentieth part
Of what I've peril'd on't.

Bel. Howe'er it chance,

I pray you be yourself.

Wil. You'll see! you'll see!

Queen. Is all prepar'd?—Then hither straight conduct
The father of the bride.

[*An officer brings in Albert.*

You promise us
Disposal of your daughter ?

Al. If affects

The maid herself the match ; your Highness' will
Is ours.

Willoughby. Talks he of ifs?—Great doubt indeed,
A beggar's daughter weds a baron's son !

Queen. Proud lord, thou'st found, how portion better can,
Than lord his son, his girl, a beggar man.
Thou now shalt own he is of blood as proud ;
The which, his child, to prove to full content,
Hath but to show herself. Lead in the bride,
And let soft music sound, while fall her steps
That lead to holy rite !

[*Music.*—*Enter BESS, magnificently attired, supported by her
Mother, and attended by a train of Bridesmaids.*

Wil. Dost see ? Dost see
What I do ?

Bel. What seest thou ?

Wil. A vision, sure,
And not a thing of earth !—that overpowers
Almost the sense which shows it me ! that seems
Too fair, too bright to stay, and I expect
Each other moment to see float away
To strain of heavenly music !

Queen. Now, my Lord.
What say'st thou now ?

Wil. Her looks bespeak her noble !

Queen. And thou Lord Thomas ?—

L. Tho. Let her be my bride !
She must be nobly born !

Queen. In truth she is so.

Lord Woodville read and say, concerns thee aught
This history? (*giving him a scroll.*)

Wood. It does!—If truth it speaks—
Which doubt I not! the Beggar is my brother—
A brother that from me did, living, ne'er
Receive a brother's right, but hate for love,
And yet whose death to love converted hate.

Al. Octavius!

Wood. Albert!

Al. Brother!

Wood. O forgive,
And with thy lands receive a brother back!

[*They embrace.*]

Wil. What, Belmont dost thou hear?

Bel. Dost thou not hear?

Wil. I do, and doubt I do;
Wonder on wonder so o'erpowers belief!
She's my own cousin!

Bel. Yes.

Wil. O proves she now
Our bloods are kindred but in constancy!!—

Queen. Come—Tie the knot.

Wil. I have a feeling now
Of what it is to die—the heavy pause
Ere life goes out!

Queen. What wait you for, Sir Priest?

Chap. Her hand to give, the maiden doth refuse.

Wil. She does! She's true!—She's mine!

Queen. Who's he that speaks?

Wood. A peasant, please your Majesty.

L. Tho. Base hind
Affectest thou my bride?

Wil. Thy bride?—She's mine
Prize of my love, proud lord! that coveted,
Her love when she was low, as now she's high,
And won it!—won it!—won what all thy gold!

Thy lands, thy honours, thy alliances,
 Could never win for thee!—what, peasant as
 I am, makes me the peer, that would not change
 Conditions with thee, wast thou twice as high,

Hos. A spark to win a woman !

L. Tho. Villain, hence.

Wil. Proud Lord, I fling the foul term back at thee!
 Nor call thee villain mere, but traitor foul !
 Who knew'st thy mistress was a virgin queen,
 Yet strov'st to rob a virgin of her pride
 By villain force ! Ha ! do I make thee blench ?
 Cower'st thou before me, peasant though I am ?
 Has not the blood of all thy noble line
 The power to hearten thee and make thee stand
 Erect in presence of the nameless brow,
 That's bent upon thee with an honest scowl ?
 Command'st me hence ?—Hence rather thou, and learn
 Whose merits do behind their titles lag,
 Were better go undubb'd ; whilst lowest hind,
 That's lord of noble deed, is lord enough !

Queen. Hear we aright ?—A peasant ?—Ha ! a light
 Breaks in upon me—Woodville !—Where's thy son,
 We wont to call our hero of romance ?

Wood. Your grace, an age it is since I have seen him.

Queen. Enough !—a pretty masque it is they play !
 I'll try the mettle of her constancy.
 Guards there !—Secure that peasant !—Sirrah, knew'st
 The presence thou didst stand in, when thou spok'st
 Just now ? To prison with him !

Bess. No !—No !—No !

Queen. Base girl ! know'st thou the blood that fills thy
 veins,

And pleadest thou for him ?—There stands the mate
 It fitteth thee to wed.—Come, say he lies
 Who boasts a hind could win a lady's love !

Al. Most gracious queen, a picture wears my child,
The likeness of her father ta'en in youth ;
I pray to know does he resemble that ?

Queen. Show me that likeness, Maiden—Ta'en for thee !
Feature for feature 'tis the peasant's own !
Give me this bauble, and that other one
Thou wearest in thy heart, throw far from it,
For by our title to the crown we wear,
We vow no peasant e'er shall call thee wife !

Bess. Recall, recall the vow !

Queen. Recall thy heart,
If thou hast given it him.

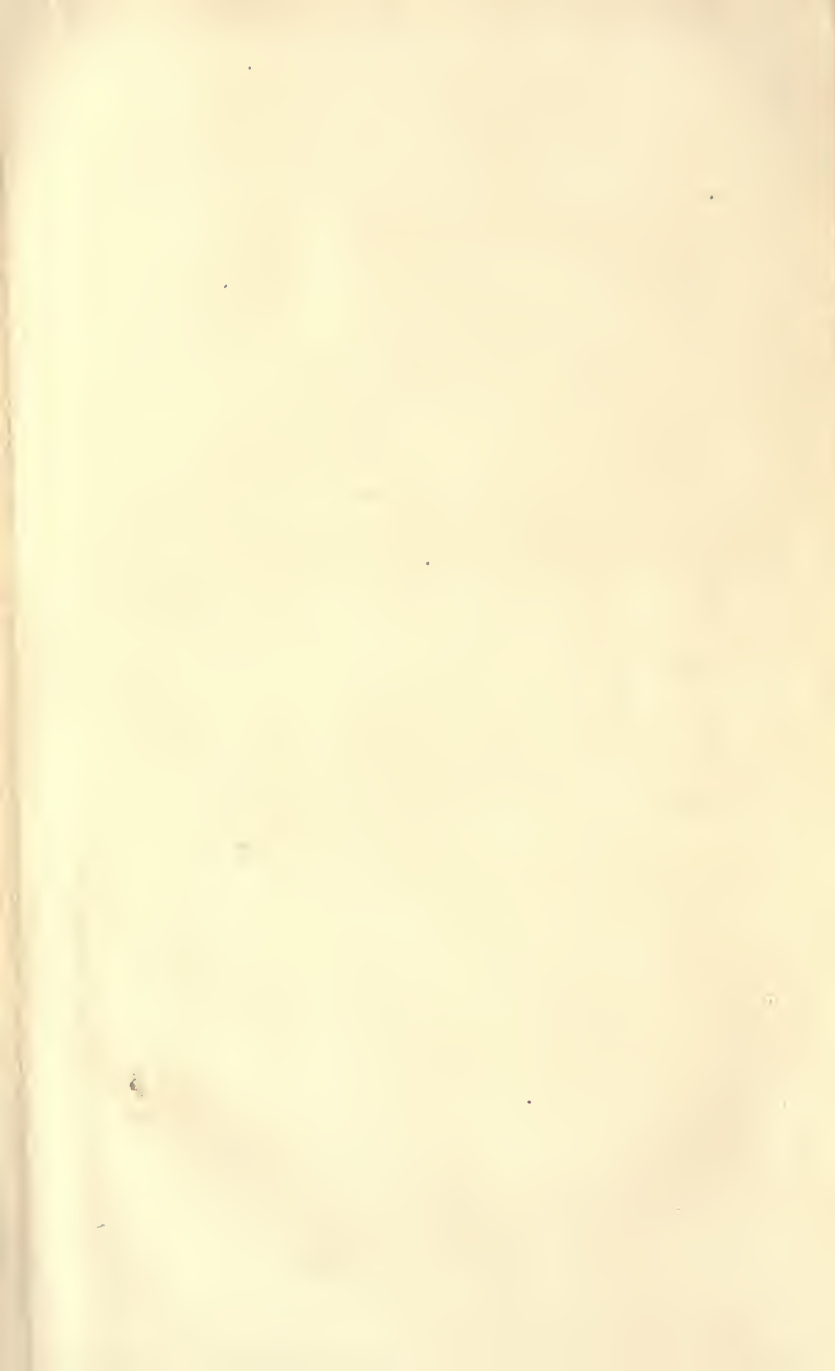
Bess. I cannot do't !

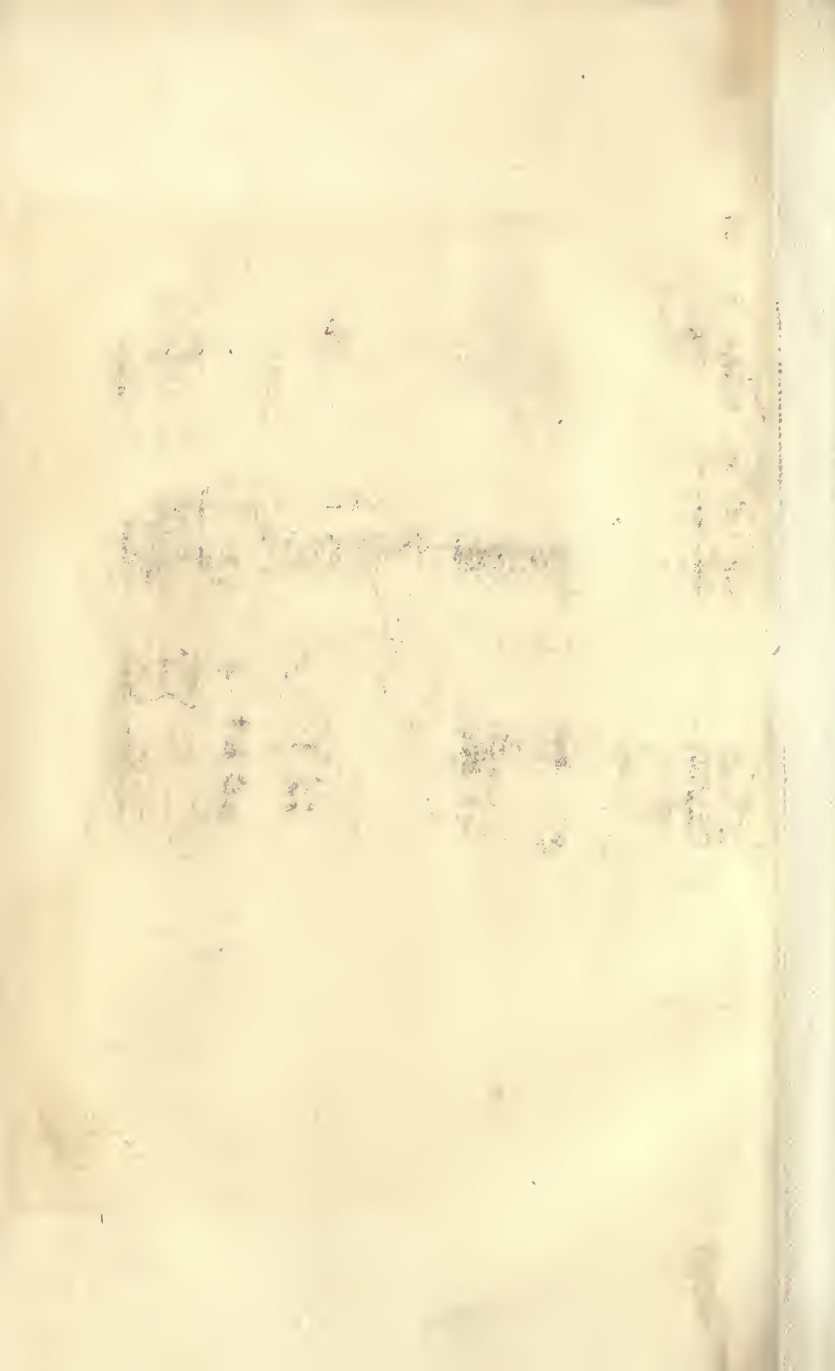
Queen. No ?

Bess. No ! He is its owner—Master—Lord,
Yes—I avow it, peasant though he is !
I could not take it from him, if I would !
I would not were he less if less could be !
No not to give it to the proudest he
That glitters in your court.

Queen. He dies for this !—

Nay, gasp not, maid—'Tis but the peasant dies,
To give thee in a baron's noble heir,
The lover whom thy constancy hath won !
Lord Woodville, join thy neice to thine own son,
For there, indeed, he stands : and greetings spare,
Until we see their nuptials solemnised ;
Which we ourself under our conduct take.
Pageant and masque shall grace their wedding day ;
And poets vie while they rehearse the tale
Of Bess, the beggar's maid of Bethnal Green.





PR Knowles, James Sheridan
4859 The beggar's daughter of
K5B4 Bethnal Green

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